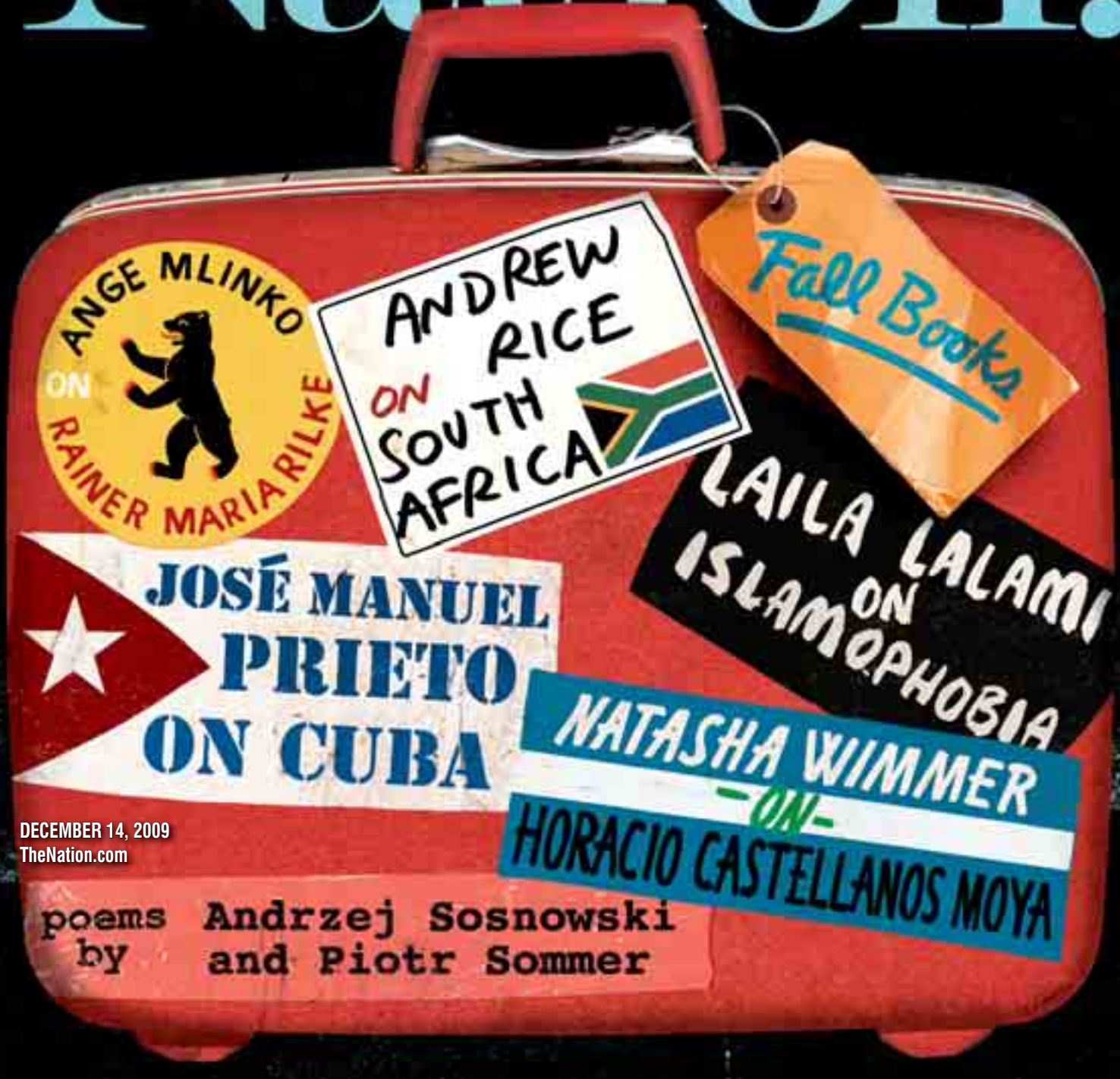
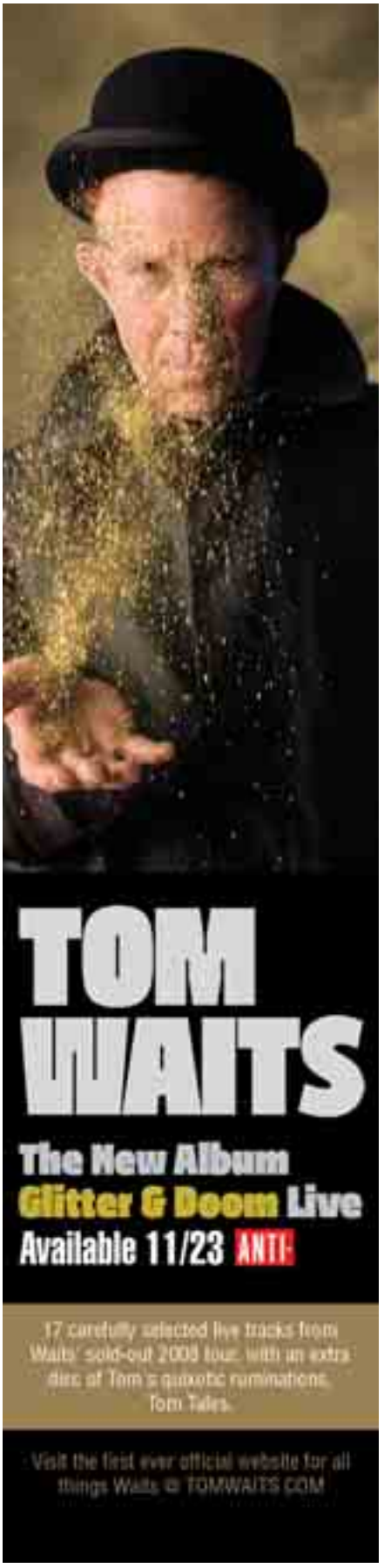
THE Nation.


ANGE MLINKO ON RAINER MARIA RILKE
ANDREW RICE ON SOUTH AFRICA
Fall Books
LAILA LALAMI ON ISLAMOPHOBIA
JOSÉ MANUEL PRIETO ON CUBA
NATASHA WIMMER -ON- HORACIO CASTELLANOS MOYA
poems by Andrzej Sosnowski and Piotr Sommer

DECEMBER 14, 2009
TheNation.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


TOM
WAITS
The New Album
Glitter & Doom Live
Available 11/23 ANTI-
17 carefully selected live tracks from
Waits' sold-out 2008 tour, with an extra
disc of Tom's quixotic ruminations,
Tom Tales.
Visit the first ever official website for all
things Waits @ TOMWAITS.COM

Exchange

Robber Barons of the World Unite!

San Francisco

Thanks to Steve Fraser for his lengthy review of my book, *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt* ["The Misunderstood Robber Baron," Nov. 30]. I wish to offer a few words in response, but I hope I don't sound querulous. Fraser offers a healthy amount of praise, and his criticisms largely spring from a sympathy with wage workers. That's precisely the attitude readers—including me—want and expect in your pages. We certainly don't find enough of it elsewhere.

But I would like to stress the nuances that I tried to impart to my portrait. Fraser leaves the impression that my book descends into simple praise for a great capitalist, whereas I tried to uncover the complexities of Vanderbilt's long career. Vanderbilt's life, I found, contributed to the central conundrums of a corporate economy in a democratic society.

A key point of the review is Fraser's claim that I take it as axiomatic that associating Vanderbilt with modernity is "a good thing." I could not disagree more. I tried to illustrate the contradictions that accompanied the emergence of modernity, with rising wealth and productivity on one hand, and increasing polarization of incomes and power on the other. I do not use "modernizing" as a synonym for "making better."

Fraser writes that I am "willfully blind" to the distinction between "dynastic capitalism" and the modern corporation. On the contrary, I stress Vanderbilt's "peculiar role" as a transitional figure. He promoted the institutionalization of modern capitalism and was an individual who towered over banks and corporations—"both a relic of a bygone era and an aggressive leader of the new." I contrast the owner/manager model of Vanderbilt's corporations with the Pennsylvania Railroad, in which ownership and management were separated. I point out how the Pennsylvania model showed the way to the future, though I also describe the corruption and self-dealing that came with it.

More important is the question of how I treat the liberal reformers—E.L. Godkin, Henry and Charles Francis Adams Jr. and others. Fraser also writes that I take a "cheap shot" when I connect the liberals' criticism of Vanderbilt with their distrust of democracy, and that I am engaging in "intellectual snobbery."

This criticism may seem convincing within the confines of his review. In my book, however, I describe how the liberals' distrust of popular government led them to oppose any attempt at government regulation. Fraser writes that I do not explain why the *New York Times*'s attack on the "modern aristocracy of capital" was incoherent. But he leaves out the rest of my quote of the editorial in question: "It is no part of our present purpose to suggest a remedy. Indeed, we must frankly confess we see none." I contrast this with new demands for federal regulation, which were endorsed by such agrarian radicals as the Grangers, to the liberals' distress.

Notions of government regulation of corporate power began to emerge, in modern form, during Vanderbilt's lifetime. Fraser ignores this issue, and my discussion of it.

Finally, Fraser writes that I overlook labor relations, industrial accidents and the air brake. These are important subjects, worthy of the many books already devoted to them. But much of Fraser's critique on this point is misplaced. As a railroad owner and executive, Vanderbilt had no role in operational management. He did not pick brakes for his trains, any more than he set timetables. Labor relations and workplace safety in the railroad industry were largely outside the confines of my biography. On the other hand, I do describe how, as a steamship owner, he fired strikers—sometimes at his own peril—and ruthlessly cut wages.

More generally, I chose to focus on the larger conundrum that Vanderbilt represented for American society. As I discuss, he helped to polarize society, to create a class of lifetime wage workers unknown before the rise of the corporation. I describe the insecurity and poverty of labor in this new economy. And I write about how his pursuit of revenge against his enemies repeatedly imperiled hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of people.

(continued on page 30)

letters@thenation.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Nation.
since 1865

Filibustering the Public

This is not what democracy looks like. When Americans vote, by overwhelming majorities, to place control of the executive and legislative branches in the hands of a party that has promised fundamental change, they are supposed to get that change. They are not supposed to watch as a handful of self-interested and special-interested senators prevent progress by exploiting the arcane rules of the less representative of our two legislative chambers—rules requiring that not a majority but a supermajority be attained in order even to discuss necessary reforms, and that a similar supermajority be in place to thwart a filibuster.

EDITORIAL

Yet this is where America, a nation often inclined to tell other nations how to practice democracy, finds itself as the debate about healthcare reform reaches its critical stage. We have a president who is prepared to sign legislation to expand access to healthcare while establishing at least some controls against profiteering by insurers. We have a House of Representatives in which a majority has voted for imperfect but real reform. We have a Senate in which a majority is ready to vote for what could be even better reform. Unfortunately, that majority is sidelined as a few wavering senators game the system.

Unless Harry Reid and his colleagues implement majority rule—by abolishing rules that allow two-fifths of the chamber's members (as few as forty-one senators) to prevent passage of that legislation—the character and quality of any "reform" will be dictated by a tiny minority from some of the nation's least populous states.

The Nation has argued for years that the filibuster is antidemocratic. We long ago rejected the notion that rules preventing the majority of senators from implementing the will of the people must be maintained as a bow to tradition. The filibuster is not constitutionally mandated. It was established by rules that have been repeatedly altered over the years. Besides, as Thomas Geoghegan recently noted (see "The Case for Busting the Filibuster," August 31/September 7), the proper reply to the history buffs is, "Yes, well, slavery and segregation are also part of our history, and that's what the filibuster was used to defend. I'm all in favor of history and tradition, but I see no reason to go on cherishing either the filibuster or the Confederate flag."

The healthcare debate highlights everything that's wrong with the filibuster. Polling shows that more than 75 percent of Americans favor a public option, yet it could be eliminated—not to gain majority support in the Senate but to gain supermajority support. That's absurd, and citizens know it. That's why tens of thousands have signed petitions circulated by the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, Florida Congressman Alan Grayson and Firedoglake demanding alteration of the filibuster rule.

Reid should listen to the outcry. This is about more than healthcare. At stake is the promise of democratic governance and the credibility of Congress. A great lie of politics is that all legislators are "bought" by special-interest donors. In fact, most senators are not bought by insurance-industry contributions. Think of Bernie Sanders and Tom Harkin, who have stood so forthrightly for robust reform, and Jay Rockefeller, who battled another senior Democrat, Max Baucus, on behalf of the public option.

But as long as antidemocratic rules remain, the deliberations will be guided not by Sanders, Harkin or Rockefeller but by the likes of Ben Nelson, who from 2003 to 2008 banked more than $600,000 in insurance-industry donations, and Blanche Lincoln, another collector of

Page 15: The New Inquisition

Inside

Exchange

2 Robber Barons of the World Unite!
T.J. STILES AND STEVE FRASER

Editorials & Comment

3 Filibustering the Public

4 How to Save Journalism
JOHN NICHOLS AND ROBERT W. MCCHESNEY

5 Noted

6 Fred Hampton's Legacy
JEFFREY HAAS

Columns

6 Deadline Poet
Wing Nut Ex Machina
CALVIN TRILLIN

9 Beat the Devil
Light in the Middle of the Tunnel
ALEXANDER COCKBURN

10 Subject to Debate
Last Column About Sarah Palin—Ever
KATHA POLLITT

Books & the Arts

11 CASTELLANOS MOYA: Dance With Snakes • The She-Devil in the Mirror
NATASHA WIMMER

15 CALDWELL: Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West
LAILA LALAMI

24 GEVISSER: A Legacy of Liberation
VLADISLAVIC: Portrait With Keys
RUSSELL: Bring Me My Machine Gun
ANDREW RICE

31 Travels by Taxi
JOSÉ MANUEL PRIETO

34 Founding a Colony (POEM)
ANDRZEJ SOSNOWSKI

35 Founding Another Colony (POEM)
ANDRZEJ SOSNOWSKI

39 SNOW, ED.: The Poetry of Rilke: Bilingual Edition
ANGE MLINKO

44 Full Harvest (POEM)
PIOTR SOMMER

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY DOUG CHAYKA;
ILLUSTRATION BY ADRIAN BELLESGUARD

VOLUME 289, NUMBER 20, DECEMBER 14, 2009
PRINTED NOVEMBER 24

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Nation.

EDITOR & PUBLISHER: Katrina vanden Heuvel

PRESIDENT: Teresa Stack

MANAGING EDITOR: Roane Carey
LITERARY EDITOR: John Palattella
EXECUTIVE EDITOR: Betsy Reed
SENIOR EDITORS: Richard Lingeman, Richard Kim
WEB EDITOR: Emily Douglas
COPY CHIEF: Judith Long
ASSISTANT LITERARY EDITOR: Miriam Markowitz
COPY EDITOR: Mark Sorkin
ASSISTANT COPY EDITOR: Dave Baker
COPY ASSOCIATE: Lisa Vandepaer
ASSISTANT WEB EDITOR: Adam Howard
ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR: Peggy Suttle
INTERNS: Daniel Chandler, Andrea D'Cruz, Fernanda Diaz, Elisabeth Garber-Paul, Britt Harwood, Nathaniel Herz, Shakthi Jothianandan, Alana Levinson, Eric Naing (*Washington*), Francis Reynolds

WASHINGTON: EDITOR: Christopher Hayes; **CORRESPONDENT:** John Nichols

NATIONAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT: William Greider

COLUMNISTS: Eric Alterman, Alexander Cockburn, Naomi Klein, Katha Pollitt, Patricia J. Williams, Gary Younge

DEPARTMENTS: *Architecture*, Jane Holtz Kay; *Art*, Barry Schwabsky; *Corporations*, Robert Sherrill; *Defense*, Michael T. Klare; *Environment*, Mark Hertsgaard; *Films*, Stuart Klawans; *Legal Affairs*, David Cole; *Net Movement*, Ari Melber; *Peace and Disarmament*, Jonathan Schell; *Poetry*, Peter Gizzi; *Sex*, JoAnn Wypijewski; *Sports*, Dave Zirin; *United Nations*, Barbara Crossette; *Deadline Poet*, Calvin Trillin

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Kai Bird, Robert L. Borosage, Stephen F. Cohen, Marc Cooper, Arthur C. Danto, Mike Davis, Slavenka Drakulic, Robert Dreyfuss, Susan Faludi, Thomas Ferguson, Doug Henwood, Max Holland, Michael Moore, Christian Parenti, Richard Pollak, Joel Rogers, Karen Rothmyer, Robert Scheer, Herman Schwartz, Bruce Shapiro, Edward Sorel, Gore Vidal, Jon Wiener, Amy Wilentz, Art Winslow

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Ari Berman, Lakshmi Chaudhry, William Deresiewicz, Liza Featherstone, Bob Moser, Eyal Press, Scott Sherman

BUREAUS: *London*, Maria Margaronis, D.D. Guttenplan; *Southern Africa*, Mark Gevisser

EDITORIAL BOARD: Deepak Bhargava, Norman Birnbaum, Barbara Ehrenreich, Richard Falk, Frances FitzGerald, Eric Foner, Philip Green, Lani Guinier, Tom Hayden, Tony Kushner, Elinor Langer, Deborah W. Meier, Toni Morrison, Walter Mosley, Victor Navasky, Pedro Antonio Noguera, Richard Parker, Michael Pertschuk, Elizabeth Pochoda, Marcus G. Raskin, Kristina Rizga, Andrea Batista Schlesinger, David Weir, Roger Wilkins

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, SPECIAL PROJECTS/WEBSITE: Peter Rothberg
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, DEVELOPMENT/ASSOCIATES: Peggy Randall
VICE PRESIDENT, ADVERTISING: Ellen Bollinger
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Amanda Hale
VICE PRESIDENT, CIRCULATION: Arthur Stupar
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Michelle O'Keefe
CIRCULATION FULFILLMENT MANAGER: Katelyn Belyus
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: Omar Rubio
TYPOGRAPHER/WEB PRODUCER: Sandy McCroskey
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Timothy Don
NATION ASSOCIATES MANAGER: Joliange Wright
PUBLICITY AND SYNDICATION DIRECTOR: Ben Wyskida
EDUCATION/COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR: Habiba Alcindor
DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL PRODUCTS: Kellye Rogers
WEB PRODUCER: Joshua Leeman
TECHNOLOGY MANAGER: Jason Brown
CONTROLLER: Mary van Valkenburg
ASSISTANT TO VICTOR NAVASKY: Mary Taylor Schilling
DATA ENTRY/MAIL COORDINATOR: John Holtz
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT: Kathleen Thomas
RECEPTIONIST/BUSINESS ASSISTANT: Elizabeth Berniak
ADVERTISING ASSISTANT: Kit Gross
CLERK: Shavonne Frazier
ACADEMIC LIAISON: Charles Bittner

PUBLISHER EMERITUS: Victor Navasky

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: E-mail to letters@thenation.com (300-word limit). Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

SUBMISSIONS: Queries only, no manuscripts. Go to www.thenation.com and click on "about," then "submissions" for a query form. Queries may be mailed to The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. SASE for poems.

INTERNET: Selections from the current issue become available Thursday night at www.thenation.com.

Printed on 100% recycled 40% post-consumer acid- and chlorine-free paper, in the USA.

This week at TheNation.com

News & Analysis

Sharon Lerner: The next fight over abortion funding

Greg Kaufmann: An interview with Representative Marcy Kaptur

Dave Zirin: The NFL's concussion headache

Blogs Robert Dreyfuss: China is a kingdom of bicycles no longer

John Nichols: Bill Moyers on the two quagmires, Vietnam and Afghanistan

Video A conversation about Castro and Cuba with novelist José Manuel Prieto

industry cash, who is so worried about potential 2010 election challenges that she cannot think straight. Nelson and Lincoln are not holding out for a better deal for their constituents; they are watching out for special interests and perceived political self-interest. And they are not even doing a good job of that, especially Lincoln, who has resisted backing a public option even though polls show a clear majority of her constituents favor this approach. It's even worse with supposedly moderate Republicans like Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, who want to be seen as reformers but won't back real reform.

Compromise with these senators compromises democracy. It warps the will of the people. And it creates bad policy—don't forget that Reid's decision earlier this year to cut funding for job creation in the stimulus bill in order to get three GOP votes limited the government's ability to address rising unemployment.

Reid should take a stand for majority rule. He has decided against the budget reconciliation process, which would allow a simple majority to pass legislation with a robust public option. That's understandable, as this procedure is arduous. But that decision must not become an excuse for making the compromises demanded by a corrupt or self-absorbed minority. No matter where the healthcare debate takes us, Reid and Senate Democrats should commit to getting rid of rules that stifle debate and prevent action, and they should eliminate the filibuster and implement majority rule. That, after all, is what democracy is supposed to look like.

How to Save Journalism

We will give you the good news first: the politicians and regulators who have it in their power to do something about the decline of American journalism are finally paying attention.

Already this year, House and Senate hearings have investigated the crisis. And even as Congress focuses this fall on healthcare reform and rising unemployment, all signs suggest that media matters will be back on the front burner in 2010, one hopes with less focus on what's gone awry and more on proposals to set things right. Encouragingly, federal agencies are taking tentative steps that could produce those proposals.

COMMENT

In early December the Federal Trade Commission will hold an unprecedented hearing to assess the radical downsizing and outright elimination of newspaper newsrooms and to consider public-policy measures that might arrest a precipitous collapse in reporting and editing of the news. The FTC staffers who have organized this hearing give the distinct impression of being seriously concerned about the crisis and seriously interested in responding to it. The Federal Communications Commission is also launching an extraordinary review of the state of journalism. The work was spearheaded initially by FCC commissioner Michael Copps, who has as firm a grasp of the problem as any player in Washington. The FCC review likely will emphasize the disintegration of local journalism. Its findings could also lead to sweeping changes in fundamental regulations.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Noted.

FAREWELL, FRANK: After sixty-two years as *The Nation*'s British-style cryptic crossword puzzle setter, **Frank W. Lewis** has decided to hang up his pencil and T-square and retire. Our December 21/28 issue will mark the last of his original submissions. His puzzles have infuriated, thrilled and satisfied generations of *Nation* puzzlers, and he will be sorely missed.

Frank's fans will remember that he first encountered cryptic crosswords in England as a young cryptanalyst cracking codes for the OSS during World War II (for which he was awarded two civilian medals of honor). And they'll recall that Frank won a contest in which *Nation* readers voted him in as our puzzle setter, in 1947. And who can forget the mayhem that ensued once, when we printed the wrong puzzle grid? Our switchboard lit up, and we had to set up a special desk to field the calls and mail out new grids to irate puzzlers. There was mayhem more recently when Frank's puzzle briefly went biweekly. What an uproar! The weekly puzzle was quickly reinstated.

Leonard Bernstein, **Kurt Vonnegut** and **Katha Pollitt** have been among his most enthusiastic admirers. Frank's puzzles used to arrive at the *Nation* office in fat air-mail packets from his home in the Caribbean and, as the technology changed, by fax, disk and finally by e-mail.

For the next six months, while we search for a new puzzle setter, we will be running Frank W. Lewis classic puzzles from past issues on the puzzle page. Please watch the magazine for details on our open search for a new puzzler (you'll find more at TheNation.com). And please watch these pages for an upcoming recap of Frank's unparalleled *Nation* career.

GEITHNER UNDER THE GUN: When Treasury Secretary **Tim Geithner** was riding high, in the first months of 2009, Oregon Congressman **Peter DeFazio** was like the kid who noted that the emperor had no clothes. DeFazio, an old-school populist Democrat, warned that Geithner and White House economic council director **Larry Summers** were paying too much attention to Wall Street and too little to Main Street. DeFazio even cast a vote against the economic stimulus package; he said it spent too much on tax cuts for the comfortable, too little on job creation. Now that America has a double-digit unemployment rate for the first time in a quarter-century, it's looking like Geithner and Summers were wrong and DeFazio was right. So the Congressman is upping the ante, responding to questions about how to right the economy, by saying, "We may have to sacrifice just two more jobs to get millions back for Americans."

DeFazio has emerged as the most outspoken progressive critic of Geithner and his compatriots, bluntly arguing that President Obama is "being failed by his economic team. Their total orientation is Wall Street, not Main Street, not real jobs." That puts the Congressman in sync with the American people, 90 percent of whom say—according to polling data shared with the **House Democratic Caucus** in mid-November—that the government response to the recession has aided bankers and brokers instead of helping real folks get jobs.

Unfortunately, other Democrats have been slower than DeFazio when it comes to making the break with Geithner. That's a mistake, as it allows conservative Republicans to play populist, as Texas Congressman **Kevin Brady** did when he told Geithner at a Joint Economic Committee hearing, "The public has lost all confidence in your ability to do the job, and it is reflecting on your president."

Any attempt by Congressional Democrats to defend Geithner (or Summers, for that matter) puts them in a position of defending misguided policies and inept insiders. Instead of making excuses for Geithner, Congressional Democrats should recognize that DeFazio is on target when he says it is absurd for Obama to have a treasury secretary whose orientation "has not been other than Wall Street, and will not be other than Wall Street."

JOHN NICHOLS

A LIBERAL LION'S LEGACY: **Ted Kennedy**, the late liberal lion of the Senate, would have been delighted by the race to fill his seat. The Democrats competing in the December 8 special primary election are working overtime to grab the Kennedy mantle. Congressman **Mike Capuano** is airing ads that recall how he and Kennedy voted against authorizing President George W. Bush to attack Iraq because Bush did not have answers to basic questions about the mission. "Now," continues Capuano, "there's a call for more troops in Afghanistan. But the questions remain: What's our mission? How do we define success? And what's our exit strategy? Without the right answers to those questions, I will never vote to send more of our sons and daughters to war. Never!" That tough stance has won Capuano support from antiwar groups such as **Progressive Democrats of America**, and his populist economic positions have won him a good deal of labor backing.

But Massachusetts Attorney General **Martha Coakley**, the other front-runner in the race, has refused to cede much space on the left to Capuano or the other two contenders, Boston Celtics managing partner **Stephen Pagliuca** and **Alan Khazei**, founder of an AmeriCorps organization called City Year.

Highlighting her wrangling with big banks, Coakley candidly declares that Wall Streeters "wrecked our economy." And she ably distinguished herself from the field by quickly and aggressively decrying the decision of House leaders to allow a particular amendment to the healthcare reform legislation that severely limited access to reproductive health services. Identifying the move as an unacceptable assault on women's rights, she said, "The inclusion of the Stupak-Pitts amendment violates the very intent of healthcare reform, which is meant to guarantee quality, affordable healthcare coverage for everyone." Capuano scrambled to agree, but Coakley carried the day on an issue Kennedy once led.

Bottom line: no one thought it would be easy to replace the late senator. But by making compelling cases to progressive voters, the leading candidates for his seat are reminding Massachusetts voters that Kennedy's ideals can, and in all likelihood will, live on in the Senate. JOHN NICHOLS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now for the bad news: the way the challenges facing journalism are being discussed, indeed the way the crisis itself is being framed, will make it tough for even the most sincere policymakers to offer a viable answer to it.

The FTC's conference is titled "How Will Journalism Survive the Internet Age?" FCC chair Julius Genachowski explains the crisis as the result of "game-changing new technologies as well as the economic downturn." The assumption is clear: it's the Internet that's the problem. But just as MTV's debut pronouncement that "Video Killed the Radio Star" proved to be dramatically overstated, so is the notion that journalism's disintegration can be attributed to a brand-new digital revolution or even an old-fashioned economic meltdown.

The decline of commercial journalism predates the web. Newsrooms began to give up on maintaining staffs sufficient to cover their communities—effectively reducing the number of reporters relative to the overall population—in the 1980s. Real cuts came in the 1990s and have accelerated since then. All the pathologies blamed on the rise of the Internet—declines in science reporting, the disappearance of serious business and labor coverage, cutbacks in investigations and the shuttering of statehouse, Washington and international bureaus—began before anyone knew what it meant to Google.

These trends went largely unnoticed because the dominant news-media firms continued to rake in colossal profits. By downsizing reporting staffs and ramping up less expensive journalism based on trivia, sensationalism and press releases, they were able for years to maintain boomtime profits. But the party was destined to come to an end, as readers and viewers gave up on "products" that no longer contained much in the way of news.

Don't get us wrong. The Internet has shaken up the commercial model of journalism. People don't pay for what they can get free online. Advertisers that subsidized journalism for more than a century now bypass news media to reach consumers directly (most devastating for the dailies has been the loss of classifieds, which have gone to Craigslist). They aren't coming back. But the primary impact of the Internet has been to accelerate and make irreversible a process that began before the digital age.

The market has voted journalism off the island. This necessary nutrient of democracy will be washed away unless we recognize that commercial values are no longer going to provide us with sufficient quality journalism. It's a waste of valuable time attempting to cook up new schemes to make the process of news gathering and distribution as profitable as it once was.

Policy-makers need to take a page from American history. The framers understood that the government must not simply assure that a free and independent press *may* exist; it must set policies and expend resources with an eye toward guaranteeing that an independent free press *will* exist. No one in the first generations of the Republic thought the market would suffice; as a result, the American independent press was built on extraordinary and massive postal and printing subsidies that lasted well into the nineteenth century, remnants of which remain with us to this day. Similar subsidies—for instance, a massive increase in funding for public and community broadcasting outlets, which have never enjoyed the advantages bestowed by regulators upon commercial broadcasters—could foster the vibrant independent journalism of the twenty-first century.

Today, as in the early Republic, our system of government cannot succeed and our individual freedoms cannot survive without an informed, participating citizenry, and that requires competitive, independent news media. For that to happen, however, the FTC, the FCC and Congress must stop blaming the Internet and start thinking about how enlightened subsidies could revitalize the very necessary public good that is journalism.

JOHN NICHOLS AND ROBERT W. McCHESNEY

John Nichols and Robert W. McChesney are the authors of The Death and Life of American Journalism, *forthcoming in January from Nation Books.*

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

Wing Nut Ex Machina

The ace that the Democrats have in their deck:
That Palin and Limbaugh and Goofy Glenn Beck
Will lead the Republicans, thus quickly wreck
The GOP's chances through wild right-wing dreck.

The GOP's base is a weird potpourri,
So maybe that ace will indeed be the key.
But maybe it won't, so most pundits agree
The Democrats really should have a Plan B.

Fred Hampton's Legacy

December 4 marks the fortieth anniversary of the raid on a Black Panther apartment in which Chicago police shot and killed Fred Hampton in his bed. Hampton was the charismatic young chairman of the Chicago Black Panther Party, and under his leadership the party's membership and influence had increased dramatically. The party had instituted a popular and expanding Breakfast for Children Program and a police accountability project. At the age of 21, Hampton was able to reach and influence gang members and welfare mothers as well as college and law students. Under his tutelage, the Panthers formed a coalition with Puerto Rican and white activists.

COMMENT

The response of the Chicago police and the ambitious Cook County state's attorney, Edward Hanrahan, the likely political heir to then-Mayor Richard J. Daley, was to harass and arrest the Panthers as often as possible. The police even opened fire on Panther headquarters.

Six hours after the predawn raid on Hampton's apartment, conducted by fourteen Chicago policemen armed with shotguns, handguns, a rifle and a .45-caliber submachine gun, Hanrahan

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

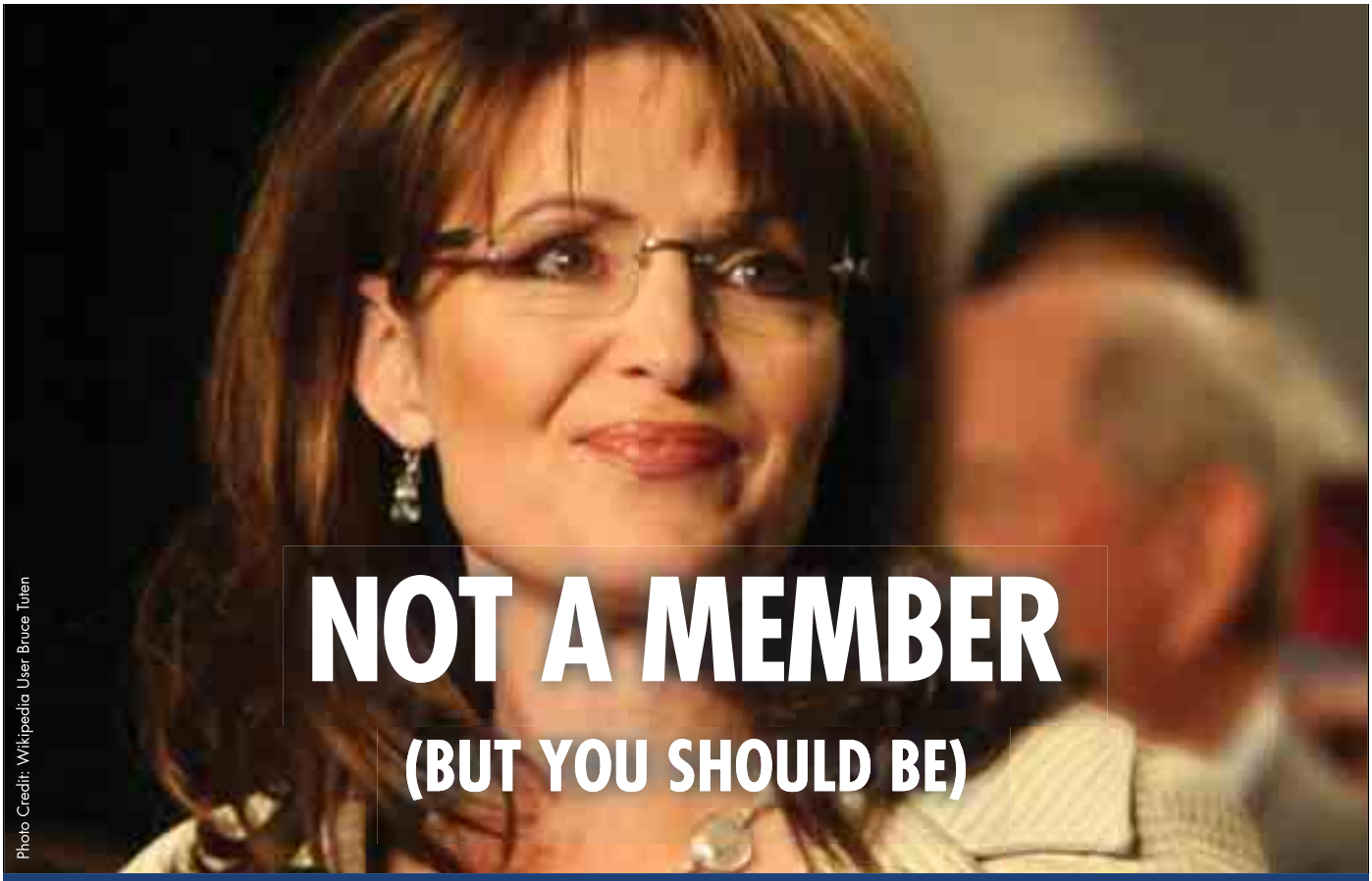


Photo Credit: Wikipedia User Bruce Tuten

The Best Books at the Best Prices.

Join today and get:

- Your first 3 books for $3.00 and every other book you buy 20-80% off list prices
- $2.00 from every purchase donated to progressive organizations, including The Nation
- The PBC newsletter with exclusive interviews, reviews, and offers
- Invitations to exclusive discussions with PBC authors.
- Books are selected by leading progressive authors and activists, including Michael Chabon, Barbara Kingsolver, Hendrik Hertzberg, John Podesta and Katrina vanden Heuvel.

"The Progressive Book Club is invaluable in moving progressive ideas to the center of the debate."
—**Governor Howard Dean, PBC Chairman**

PROGRESSIVE BOOK CLUB®

JOIN TODAY » www.ProgressiveBookClub.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

went on TV to give the police version. He claimed the Panthers, and Hampton in particular, had opened fire on the police, who he said were innocently serving a search warrant for weapons, and that the Panthers continued firing despite several police attempts at a cease-fire.

I was the first person to interview the survivors in the police lockup, where Hampton's crying and pregnant fiancée told me that after she was pulled from the room, police came in and fired two shots into Hampton and said, "He's good and dead now." The autopsy showed he had been shot twice in the head at point-blank range. My colleagues went to the raid scene, examined the bullet holes and found that the trajectory of all the bullets except one was from the direction of the police toward the Panthers. Later, an FBI firearms expert testified that more than eighty shots were fired by the police at the Panthers, with only one coming from a Panther. That one shot was fired in a vertical direction by a falling Mark Clark after he had been fatally wounded.

Two years after the murder, antiwar activists raided the FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania, and found and distributed documents that demonstrated that FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover was conducting a secret war on the left—the Counterintelligence Program, or Cointelpro. Its most aggressive and lethal tactics were used against the black movement, and the Panthers in particular. Cointelpro mandated FBI agents in cities with Panther chapters to "cripple," "disrupt" and "destroy" the Panthers and their breakfast program and to prevent the rise of a "messiah" who could unify and electrify the black masses.

In 1969 I was a young, newly radicalized lawyer, one of the founders of a collective called the People's Law Office, which represented the Panthers. After successfully defending the survivors of the raid against bogus criminal charges, we filed a civil rights suit against the police and the prosecutor, and later the FBI. My book *The Assassination of Fred Hampton* chronicles our long legal and political struggle to uncover the truth about the FBI's role in the killing. After thirteen years of litigation, we proved that the raid was a Cointelpro operation. FBI agents in Chicago gave Hanrahan and the Chicago police a floor plan of Hampton's apartment, which included the location of the bed where Hampton would be sleeping. They urged Hanrahan to conduct the raid and later took credit for it in internal documents. The FBI informant who provided the floor plan was given a bonus because his information was deemed to be of "tremendous value" to what one agent referred to as the "success" of the raid.

Noam Chomsky has called the murder of Fred Hampton "the gravest domestic crime of the Nixon Administration." It is hard to imagine a more serious abuse by a government than the deliberate assassination of a citizen for his political beliefs and activity. But though we were finally able to reveal that Hampton's death had been an assassination, it has never gotten the attention it deserves. The government's cover-up and stonewalling basically worked.

Following Watergate and numerous revelations in the early 1970s about intelligence agencies run amok, the Senate's Church Committee was formed to investigate such intelligence abuses as assassination plots and spying on US citizens [see Christopher Hayes, "The Secret Government," September 14]. After documenting Cointelpro's secret and illegal attacks on the left, the committee sought to guarantee FBI and CIA accountability by requiring Congressional oversight, including reporting of intelligence activities. The two strongest opponents of this oversight in the Ford administration were the chief of staff, Donald Rumsfeld, and Rumsfeld's deputy, Dick Cheney. Together with Antonin Scalia, who was then head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, they persuaded Ford to veto legislation expanding the Freedom of Information Act to cover intelligence documents. Fortunately Congress overrode the veto.

Three decades later we are watching history repeat itself. In the 1960s the enemy was domestic dissent; today the enemy is international terrorism. In both cases, however, the right used fear to increase the powers of police and government agencies to operate in secret and with impunity. Cheney and Rumsfeld used 9/11 to beat back Church Committee restrictions on intelligence activities and reporting requirements. They encouraged intelligence agencies to spy on US citizens and to ignore international and US law forbidding torture and kidnapping.

In 1978 the Justice Department argued that FBI operatives were immune from liability for killing Hampton because they were carrying out government policy. An incredulous Judge Swygert asked the US Attorney if he thought they would be immune if they had given the police a gun and told them to murder Hampton. The government retreated from the "good German" defense at that point. In our own day, Attorney General Eric Holder has appointed a special prosecutor to look into the acts of torture carried out by CIA officers amid claims they are immune because they were carrying out government policy.

One lesson we should learn from the Hampton case is that although it's important to put strong legal limitations on what police and intelligence agencies are permitted to do, that is not enough to prevent abuses. What's required is accountability, in the form of criminal prosecution, not only for those who carry out criminal policies but for those who formulate them. Thus far Holder's investigation is limited to those who carried out the policy of torture and may have exceeded its carefully hedged strictures. But the investigation we really need will look at the policy itself, which by all appearances was a criminal conspiracy by Cheney, Rumsfeld and a group of administration lawyers to subvert the Constitution.

Fred Hampton's legacy should be our continued vigilance against government crimes and secrecy and our demand that officials be held responsible and criminally liable when they violate the law. This is about deterrence and equal justice, not revenge.

JEFFREY HAAS

Jeffrey Haas (hamptonbook.com), a civil rights attorney, is the author of The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther, *published in November.*

Secret US War in Pakistan

On TheNation.com and in next week's issue: Jeremy Scahill's explosive report on a covert US military program in Pakistan. According to military intelligence and former Blackwater sources, the firm's operatives work with US Special Forces to plan assassinations of Taliban and Al Qaeda targets, "snatch and grabs," drone attacks and other sensitive actions—belying the official claim that there are no US military operations in Pakistan.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Alexander Cockburn

Light in the Middle of the Tunnel

No one told us it would be boring, but it is. We're talking here about the Obama presidency. Having an adulterer and a moron at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue for eight years apiece, plus Dick Cheney down the corridor, spoiled us. Which side of Bill's head did Hillary hit with the lamp? Would George fight his way to the end of the sentence in his daily battles with the English language?

These days tranquillity reigns—or seems to—in the Obamas' private quarters. Senior White House staffers remain loyal and tight-lipped. Small wonder Jay Leno's nightly show is sagging. There was nothing to make jokes about, at least until Sarah Palin went on her book tour.

Carter was another Democratic president who didn't drink or fornicate or steal. But he had brother Billy and the colorful Bert Lance as his director of OMB, already mired in Southern Gothic scandal by the middle of Carter's first year in office. He had the late Hamilton Jordan as his chief of staff, getting drunk at state dinners and making lewd verbal overtures to the wife of the Egyptian ambassador. Obama's chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, may be foul-mouthed, but thus far he's run a ship offering about as much drama as the upper executive tier of an insurance company in Ames, Iowa.

Politics is getting duller by the day, too, as the idealists watch their expectations trickling all too swiftly through the hourglass. What's left? Enforcing private coverage and savaging the Medicare Advantage plans of low-income seniors (see Mary Lynn Cramer's exposés of the latter outrage, on the *CounterPunch* site). Obama has dipped below 50 percent in public approval, which—so the pollsters tell us—is nothing particularly unusual for a new president at this stage of the game. What's going to stop him sliding down more?

But lo! There's light a little way up the tunnel: the upcoming trial in the shadow of Ground Zero of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and four alleged co-conspirators, the best news for the print press since Monica Lewinsky. Ahead lie months of searing headlines and blood-curdling editorial howls for vengeance in the *New York Post* and the *Daily News*.

On November 13, Attorney General Eric Holder announced that the five will go on trial in federal court in New York for planning the attacks of September 11, 2001. The fact that Holder, a man with famously sensitive political antennae, told the press that political considerations played no part in his decision only signals the coarsely political nature of his decision.

The scenario envisaged by Obama, Emanuel and Holder is presumably that sometime before the election of 2012, KSM will be ushered into an execution chamber, thus vindicating Obama's oft-advertised commitment to track down the perps of 9/11 and kill them. So eager was Obama to underline this point that while in Asia he declared that those offended by the trial will not find it "offensive at all when he's convicted and when the death penalty is applied to him." This remark came after his assertion that the trial would be "subject to the most exacting demands of justice." Realizing that the latter remark might be construed by some pettifogging civil libertarians as prejudicial to a fair trial, Obama then added piously that he was "not going to be in that courtroom. That's the job of the prosecutors, the judge and the jury."

It's certain that the legal team mustered to defend KSM and the other four will be reviewing mountains of documents amassed by the prosecution, setting forth the evidentiary chain that led to the indictments of the Ground Zero Five. Of course, most of these will no doubt be classified top secret, to be reviewed by defense lawyers only under conditions of stringent security; but it's a safe bet that enough will be leaked to portray the Bush administration and Republicans in general in a harshly unflattering light, with Bush and Cheney ignoring profuse indications of the unfolding conspiracy.

For their part, the Republicans also exult at the opportunity offered them by Holder's decision to savage the Obama administration as soft on terror for haling KSM and the others into a US court, as opposed to giving them a drumhead trial by military "commission" and dispatching them without the contemptible procedures of a civilian trial.

Memories of the O.J. Simpson jury's verdict of not guilty are a strong undercurrent here. In many of the berserk commentaries from the right, one can smell the panic fear that somehow a slimeball defense attorney in the Johnnie Cochran mold will dupe a jury (composed, remember, of people solemnly swearing they have an open mind on the case) into letting KSM and the others slip off the hook and stride from the courtroom, free men.

There's not the remotest chance of that, though it is true that a single eccentric juror could hang the jury, necessitating a retrial. And if the jury "hangs" on the death penalty, there is no do-over, and a life sentence is imposed.

There are those who gravely lament the impending spectacle, ranging from pinkos raising wussy concerns about secret witnesses and confessions extorted under torture, to the right blaring that KSM and the others will defile the Foley courtroom with their filthy Mulsim diatribes. Bring them on, say I. The show trial is as American as cherry pie, as the former Black Panther H. Rap Brown—currently serving life without the possibility of parole in the supermax in Florence, Colorado—famously said about violence.

American political life is at its most vivid amid show trials. Their glare discloses the larger political system in all its pretensions. At the very least we need the drama to help us get through what is looking more and more like the bland, respectable corporate rule of the Eisenhower years. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Katha Pollitt

Last Column About Sarah Palin—Ever

Going Rogue has been out only a day or two as I write, and I've already read so many blogs and columns and articles and reviews and participated in so many listserv discussions about it, I'm sick to death not only of Sarah Palin but of Palin-related snark, outrage, ruminations and fact checks. I don't want to follow the timeline of Bristol's pregnancy on *Vanity Fair*'s website. I don't want to delve into how many hockey games this self-described hockey mom actually attended or how many moose she really shot. I don't want to find out the back story behind her digs at Levi Johnston or the McCain campaign. Fish in a barrel! You know something's gone off the rails when the ferociously smart Linda Hirshman defends Palin's charging her $150,000 campaign wardrobe to the McCain campaign (or possibly, depending on whom you believe, not) at the Daily Beast on the grounds that, unlike stylish Michelle Obama, she doesn't have a rich husband to pay for her clothes—and when writers hammer away at this thesis for seventy posts on a listserv. All right, I admit I wrote several of those posts. And, yes, I am writing this column. What is it about this absurd woman that is so fascinating?

As just about every columnist in the world has noted by now, including me more than once, Palin is a bundle of contradictions: a Christian reactionary who has kind words for Title IX and thinks it's fine to have a top government job, five kids and a lower-earning husband; a seriously underqualified politician chosen by the desperate John McCain at least partly because of her gender and looks who exploits those assets every chance she gets—but if called on it, accuses her critics of sexism. And you know what? Some of them deserve to be called out! *Newsweek*'s cover, for instance, was doubly sexist. The headline How Do You Solve a Problem Like Sarah? (a cutesy reference to Maria, the madcap novice nun in *The Sound of Music*) would never have been used for a man. (How do you solve a problem like Bart Stupak? Glenn Beck? Hamid Karzai?) The accompanying photo, originally shot for *Runner's World*, showed Palin in running shorts, with a come-hither smile, a beauty-queen curve-accentuating pose, leaning on the flag and holding not one but two BlackBerries: ooh, Patriot Barbie is busy! (The inside is worse: a shot-from-behind pic of her shapely calves and shiny black high-heeled shoes, a plastic Palin doll in schoolgirl pornwear. Oh, women of *Newsweek*, have you no influence at all with your frat-boy overlords?) But it also has to be said that *Runner's World* did not tie Palin up and make her pose like that. Any more than the McCain campaign required her to go unprepared to her interview with Katie Couric, or Levi Johnston forces her to talk trash just because he does. For a person who says "common sense" is all we need to solve our most intractable problems, Palin seems to have very little.

It is indeed annoying to have Palin paradoxes thrown in one's feminist face all day. You see, says conventional wisdom, you said women should just vote for women, and look what you got! (Note to CW: feminists never said women should vote for women just because of their gender. They said women should vote for feminists.) But parsing the feminist semiotics of Sarah Palin is getting as old as all those articles about why teenage girls love vampires. Someday there will be whole women's studies conferences devoted to her, the way there used to be scholarly panels on Madonna. Maybe even endowed chairs of Palin studies. But does feminism really have all that much to do with her apotheosis?

The one thing Palin seems to know how to do is use the media's infatuation with celebrity, hotness and women's bodies to aggrandize herself. As Bill O'Reilly told her, "You are the biggest threat because you are a star.... There aren't any other Republicans who are media stars but you." Except for her politics, she's the living embodiment of the constantly updated Huffington Post cover page, in which Washington reporting and Jon and Kate and assorted pushers of quackery and psychobabble jostle against a constant stream of semi-naked photos of semi-celebs, whose breasts and cosmetic surgeries you are invited to rate. For her fans she may be a goddess of vitality and truth, but for everyone else she's the first political female train wreck, the Paris Hilton or Lindsay Lohan of the Republican Party. We can't stop looking. Maybe she'll confuse Iran and Iraq again! And tell about praying on the phone with Rick Warren while taking a shower! Or write another letter in God's voice about her baby, Trig! Maybe Palin is cosmic payback for all those nasty jokes about Hillary's pantsuits and thick ankles, and for the mighty cry of *borrring!* that goes up all over the media whenever a politician—Al Gore?—displays actual knowledge of a complex subject. You wanted hot and relatable? You got it.

It doesn't have to be this way. Consider Angela Merkel. The press (the foreign press, mostly) went wild when she wore a low-cut gown to the opening of the Oslo opera house last year. If you Google her, "Angela Merkel cleavage" is the first suggested search term that comes up—but Merkel herself doesn't engage with media-style hyped-up feminine self-presentation. She dresses in a nondescript way, doesn't wear a lot of makeup—in fact, she looks like she doesn't wear any makeup—and her hair is so ordinary, I can't even remember how she wears it. Her husband is not part of her day-to-day story. She is a middle-age woman with a PhD in physics, a pleasant lined face and a low-key, straightforward manner. Even people who would never vote for her seem to respect her as a human being. So far as I know, there are no Angela Merkel nutcrackers or plastic dolls in slutty costumes for sale on the Internet.

It is so restful, you can't believe it. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books & the Arts.

ADRIAN BELLESGUARD

Novelist From Another Planet

by NATASHA WIMMER

In 2004, in an essay in the Mexican magazine *Letras Libres*, Horacio Castellanos Moya recalled how, on a rainy August afternoon in San Salvador in 1978, he and two friends, all three of them poets in their early 20s, were interrupted by a knock on the door as they put together the ninth issue of their literary magazine *El Papo/Cosa Poética* (The Jowl/Poetic Thing). The fat man in an untucked shirt who came to the door was looking for someone who didn't live there, but the tone of his voice and the military jeep across the street told the true story—somehow the poets had attracted the attention of the secret police.

None of the three were involved in politics. In fact, they had started the magazine because they felt trapped between the right-wing extremism of El Salvador's newspapers and the doctrinaire demands of the left-wing Latin American literary establishment. Their passions were literary, Modernist, even esoteric: they were reading poets like Pessoa, Michaux, Perse, Milosz, Montale, Pavese, in translations published in Argentina. And yet by the end of 1978, military death squads were blowing up the bookstores that sold poetry in translation, and the career paths for young writers had changed: instead of becoming journalists or professors or novelists, they could become organizers or guerrilla leaders or press agents for the revolutionary forces of the FMLN.

The shift came gradually, but as civil war took hold in El Salvador, it trespassed deep into not only the reality of everyday life but also the world of the imagination, of aspiration, of expectations. A day came when no one questioned the fact that poets carried Uzis in their backpacks, and that instead of Pessoa and Michaux they read Lenin and Clausewitz. Castellanos Moya's friends became "proletarianized" and organized strikes. Castellanos Moya himself observed the early stages of this from afar. His family had the means to send him out of the country, and by February 1979 he was in Toronto, watching the war on television. Near the end of the year, he was back—letters had come pleading for him to return, Toronto was cold—but he felt, as he says in the *Letras Libres* essay, like an extraterrestrial, an alien in a world of war, terror, weapons and conspiracy.

Natasha Wimmer is the translator of Roberto Bolaño's The Savage Detectives *and* 2666.

Dance With Snakes
By Horacio Castellanos Moya.
Translated by Lee Paula Springer.
Biblioasis. 156 pp. Paper $15.95.

The She-Devil in the Mirror
By Horacio Castellanos Moya.
Translated by Katherine Silver.
New Directions. 191 pp. Paper $14.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The civil war, which ended in 1992, shaped Castellanos Moya's life and his fiction, but it never seems to have conquered his imagination. Though most of his novels (there are now nine) revolve in some way around the war and its aftereffects, Castellanos Moya never assimilates or romanticizes the culture of violence, never loses his hyper-awareness of its strangeness. As a writer, he is at once highly sensitive to brutality and unsentimental about it. In the brilliantly funny and unsettling *Senselessness*, which in 2008 became his first novel to be translated into English, the narrator is a writer who has taken a job copy-editing an eleven-hundred-page human rights report on the massacre of Indians during the civil war in an unnamed Central American country, and who finds himself struck by the strange beauty of the language in which the victims describe the violence of their aggressors. The phrases he copies down migrate into his banal accounts of office politics and failed seductions, until gradually the horrors that the Indians describe leak into his consciousness and turn what was a mild case of the jitters into raging paranoia.

His paranoia is probably justified. He's working for the Catholic Church, at an office in the archbishop's palace in a shabby Central American capital, and he's nervous about everything from his salary (will it be paid on time?) to the quality of the tap water to the motives of all kinds of suspicious-looking characters on the street. His twitchy fastidiousness, his cranky alienation from his surroundings and his perpetual sense of aggrievement make him a familiar character in Castellanos Moya's fictional universe. He's immersed in an interminable chronicle of war and terror, but he's not ennobled by it or touched by the grandeur of tragedy. When he meets Joseba, the Spanish psychiatrist in charge of collecting the testimonies published in the report, he's properly impressed, but his rambling profession of admiration quickly takes a number of absurd turns in which he first imagines Joseba shedding his "pellucid armor of a loyal knight-errant" in order to get it on with their co-worker Fátima, and ends up babbling about Prince Felipe of Spain and his Norwegian girlfriend ("I could practically taste that Nordic flesh, I told Joseba").

The writer's two obsessions are his own safety and the pursuit of sex (particularly with Fátima), and these preoccupations collide alarmingly when he finally gets Fátima into bed. In a hilarious sex scene, he is first jolted when Fátima asks him point-blank whether he'd like a blow job or a hand job and then revolted when she takes off her military boots, from which wafts a terrible stench. After a humiliating failure to complete the act, he's disturbed by the revelation that her boyfriend is a major in the Uruguayan army, due to arrive in the country the next day, and he's utterly terrified when Fátima explains that she's honor-bound to tell him about their encounter.

The ignominy of the writer's adventures and his pusillanimity stand in marked contrast to the macho attitudes of the so-called warriors who perpetrated the atrocities described in the report. This is subtly subversive, as is the protagonist's whiny garrulousness. The narration of war crimes, whether in fiction or news reports, tends to come wrapped in a kind of reverence or hushed awe, or at the very least, a grave reserve. Such a tone shows a proper respect for the victims, but it can inadvertently dignify the crime, too. Here and elsewhere, Castellanos Moya deflates the rhetoric around the atrocities of war in Central America in order to reveal them as the squalid, shameful acts they really are.

If *El asco* is a torrent of inspired vitriol, *Dance With Snakes* is an extra helping of venom.

Senselessness is one of Castellanos Moya's more recent novels, published in Spanish in 2004. Translations of two earlier novels have just been issued in the United States: *Dance With Snakes* (1996) and *The She-Devil in the Mirror* (2000). Both of them are vintage Castellanos Moya, written around the same time as the as-yet-untranslated novel that made his name in Latin America, *El asco: Thomas Bernhard en San Salvador* (Revulsion: Thomas Bernhard in San Salvador, 1997). After his brief return to El Salvador in 1979, Castellanos Moya spent most of the war years abroad, primarily in Mexico City. He ran a press agency for the FMLN for a few years, but violence within the ranks of the guerrilla forces and a hardening of revolutionary ideology caused him to disassociate himself from the movement. As the war was winding down, he returned to San Salvador, where he started a magazine and then a weekly newspaper, earnestly seeking to support the transition to peace and create a cultural framework for democracy. The failure of the newspaper in 1995 for lack of funding was the backdrop against which Castellanos Moya wrote *El asco*. Upon its publication, he received death threats and was forced to leave the country.

El asco is a 119-page rant, a no-holds-barred Bernhardian monologue delivered by Edgardo Vega, a Salvadoran living in exile who has returned briefly to the country and finds it execrable in every way. Vega, an art historian at McGill University in Canada, directs his remarks to a writer called Moya, a childhood friend who's trying to start a new kind of newspaper. Vega hates absolutely everything about El Salvador, from its most popular politician (a "criminal psychopath") to its capital ("it has all the poverty and filth of the great cities and none of their virtues") to its monuments (the "Monument to Our Distant Brother" reminds him of a giant urinal). In general, the excretory functions are frequently referenced: *pupusas* and the local beer give him diarrhea.

One of the larger points Vega makes is that El Salvador is a nonexistent country, at least artistically: "no one's heard of it, nobody born here exists in the world of art unless it's because of politics or crime." On the world stage, El Salvador is notable solely for the brutality of its civil war and the corruption of its government. And the country itself has no interest in literature or history. "This is an oral culture, Moya…a culture that leapt from the most horrendous illiteracy to an absorption with the idiocy of the television, a deadly leap, Moya, this culture skipped right over the written word, it simply missed the centuries in which humanity developed through the written word." As if to make Vega's point for him, a university in San Salvador has eliminated its literature department, and none of the city's universities offer courses in history.

This is hyperbole, of course, but Castellanos Moya has talked more earnestly, too, about how hard it is to write in a region where violence and crime have created a landscape of brutality and impunity. The headline news can't be ignored, but at the same time it's hard to make use of it in a convincing fictional way. In a lecture given at the University of Paris in 2007, he cited a favorite tactic of the Mexican drug cartels—decapitating informers and leaving their severed heads outside police stations—as an example of a real act of violence that's too extreme to be credible as fiction. And yet this is the kind of material that's been thrust upon him. Maybe it's not the beat he would have chosen—the reader can't help but get that sense—but his wry outrage (at the crimes committed, as well as at his assignment as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The MIT Press

Chaos and Organization in Health Care

Thomas H. Lee, M.D., and James J. Mongan, M.D.

"Two of the most skilled and admired senior health care executives in America offer their diagnosis and prescription for a troubled, unsustainable health care system. Their insights rest on decades of experience and sound science, and their recommendations are textured and sophisticated. I hope we have the courage and discipline to listen to them and act."
— Donald M. Berwick, President and CEO, Institute for Healthcare Improvement

360 pp., 19 illus., $29.95 cloth

Offshoring of American Jobs

WHAT RESPONSE FROM U.S. ECONOMIC POLICY?

Jagdish Bhagwati and Alan S. Blinder
edited and with an introduction by Benjamin M. Friedman

"This thin volume offers readers credible economic analysis of the magnitude and significance of [the] growing outsourcing phenomenon and should help the Obama administration to pursue sound trade and employment policies." — T.N. Srinivasan, Yale University

Alvin Hansen Symposium on Public Policy at Harvard University
144 pp., 1 illus., $18.95 cloth

Now in Paper

Escape from Empire

THE DEVELOPING WORLD'S JOURNEY THROUGH HEAVEN AND HELL

Alice H. Amsden

"A valuable contribution to the appraisal of international development disappointments, not least because of the meticulous analysis of American economic foreign policy in the twentieth century." — Patrick Shea, *Political Studies Review*

208 pp., 9 illus., $14.95 paper

Now in Paper

The Chomsky Effect

A RADICAL WORKS BEYOND THE IVORY TOWER

Robert F. Barsky

"This book should be read by anyone interested in the existing or potential role for public intellectuals in American society and in politics, particularly." — Richard C. Collins, *Virginia Quarterly Review*

400 pp., 11 illus., $15.95 paper

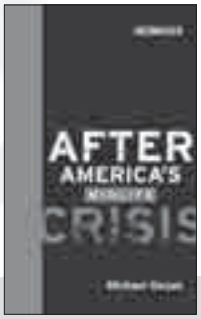
Radical, Religious, and Violent

THE NEW ECONOMICS OF TERRORISM

Eli Berman

"A brilliant study of terrorist violence, *Radical, Religious, and Violent* offers an innovative and powerful explanation for the lethality of violent religious groups. This is an important and compelling work by an outstanding scholar."
— Richard English, author of *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*

280 pp., 38 illus., $24.95 cloth



After America's Midlife Crisis

Michael Gecan

A longtime community organizer outlines a way to reverse the fifty-year decline in social mobility and economic progress.

A Boston Review Book • 144 pp., $14.95 cloth

ZONE BOOKS

The Enemy of All

PIRACY AND THE LAW OF NATIONS

Daniel Heller-Roazen

"Classics, history, law, literature, philosophy, jurisprudence, and above all language—these are the archives Heller-Roazen artfully enlists for his story of the development and contemporary relevance of the 'piratical paradigm'. *The Enemy of All* makes an invaluable contribution to comprehending the altered terrain of international politics and ethics occasioned by the emergence of terror and rogue states."
— Wendy Brown, University of California, Berkeley

Distributed for Zone Books • 295 pp., $28.95 cloth

The Power of Inclusive Exclusion

ANATOMY OF ISRAELI RULE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

edited by Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni, and Sari Hanafi

"*The Power of Inclusive Exclusion* critically recasts what we have understood about the nature of colonization in Palestine while it demands that we ask better questions about the ongoing violence of colonization across a broader global terrain." — Ann Laura Stoler, The New School for Social Research

Distributed for Zone Books • 650 pp., 52 illus., $38.95 cloth

To order call 800-405-1619 • **http://mitpress.mit.edu** • Visit our e-books store: **http://mitpress-ebooks.mit.edu**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their chronicler) serves him well as a writer.

El asco struck a nerve not just in El Salvador but across Latin America. Photocopies of it were circulated where the printed book wasn't available, and in an interview with Castellanos Moya (published in the online journal *The Quarterly Conversation*, which does an admirable job of covering literature in translation), Mauro Javier Cardenas notes that everyone in Mexico City seemed to be reading it in the late 1990s. More than ten years after its publication, it is taught in at least one Salvadoran university, but it continues to be reviled in the Salvadoran press.

If *El asco* is a torrent of inspired vitriol, *Dance With Snakes* is an extra helping of venom. It's Castellanos Moya's only overtly fantastical novel, and a different kind of revenge fantasy. Instead of working the intellectual angle, it goes for the jugular. Eduardo Sosa is an unemployed graduate in sociology who develops a fascination with a yellow Chevrolet parked on his street. The windows of the car are covered with cardboard, and its inhabitant, a grimy individual called Jacinto Bustillo, emerges only at night. Shortly after befriending Bustillo, Sosa stabs him to death in an alleyway and takes possession of the Chevrolet. He feels strangely comfortable in Bustillo's smelly hideout, where he's surprised to discover four poisonous but friendly snakes in residence. Beti, Loli, Valentina and Carmela—ladies all—fill him in on Bustillo's story. Before Bustillo took to the streets, he was a prosperous accountant, but then he began an affair with his secretary and her husband had her killed.

Curious, Sosa sets out to visit Bustillo's former wife and his lover's husband, but he and the ladies get sidetracked by a visit to the mall. The snakes are thirsty for action, and guards and wealthy customers are slain left and right. A stop at the market in the city center is even more deadly: the ladies slither through the stalls, leaving behind dozens of bodies. Sosa knifes Bustillo's wife and then moves on to check out Raúl Pineda, the husband who had Bustillo's lover killed. After a temporary setback and another snake attack (plus a giant fireball) at a fancy Esso station, Sosa and his snakes massacre Pineda and a roomful of his friends, who turn out to be narcotics agents partying with bags of dope.

By this point, Deputy Commissioner Handal is on the case, and the novel turns into a police procedural. Handal is one of the many recurring characters in Moya's novels (he'll show up again in *The She-Devil in the Mirror*); another is Rita Mena, an ambitious reporter for the newspaper *Ocho Columnas*. In the fictional climate that Castellanos Moya conjures up, the idea that there are policemen and reporters who go about their business in a more or less efficient way is almost harder to believe than the possibility that four talking snakes and a rogue sociologist might terrorize a city. In fact, the snake attacks come to seem almost plausible—just another tabloid horror tale—that is, until the lurid, outrageous denouement, which begins with a dose of marijuana-infused snake-flesh soup and ends with a graphic episode of man-snake love.

The snakes are a living, writhing embodiment of the paranoia that Castellanos Moya so often channels. Nothing could be as terrifying and unpredictable (and faintly ridiculous) as a gaggle of poisonous snakes. In the novel, all of San Salvador lives in fear of a new attack. Even Rita Mena, the tough reporter, is spooked by a false sighting of a yellow Chevrolet ("'The snakes!' she shouts. 'They're coming!'"). Precisely because they're so ludicrous and so terrible, they're the perfect stand-in for real-life violence that's too extreme to be credibly portrayed in fiction. And Sosa might easily stand for those Salvadorans who were seduced by the culture of violence during the war; who took on new wartime identities (everyone assumes it's Bustillo who's committing the crimes); and who resume their civilian lives in the end, with no repercussions.

Castellanos Moya's writing is plain and colloquial, even calculatedly artless. Often it achieves a pleasingly jittery, caffeinated rhythm, but the satisfaction of these novels is less in the prose than in their cleverness and the sharpness of their bite. And the no-frills language serves a purpose: it signals that nothing is hidden in the trappings of eloquence. Like Roberto Bolaño, who was a friend, Castellanos Moya is an anti-rhetorical writer, determined not to settle for smooth turns of phrase (though Bolaño's oblique lyricism otherwise has little to do with Castellanos Moya's bluntness). The plainness and the slang make his work tough going for translators, but both Katherine Silver and Lee Paula Springer acquit themselves admirably. Springer tackles the snake mayhem with relish and delicacy, and Silver (who also translated *Senselessness*) grapples valiantly with the chatty flow of *The She-Devil in the Mirror*, which is a monologue of the sort that makes translators tear their hair out.

The voice heard in *The She-Devil in the Mirror* is that of Laura Rivera, a vapid, canny Salvadoran society girl whose best friend has been murdered, shot in her own living room in front of her two daughters. Laura can't imagine who could have wanted to kill Olga María, but she does know a lot about her friend's life—particularly her ex-lovers, of whom it is soon revealed there were many. The killer has been dubbed RoboCop: he's big, he's tall, he has short hair and he walks like the movie character, according to one of Olga María's daughters. The question is who hired him, and Deputy Commissioner Handal (here rendered as Deputy Chief Handal) is on the job again, looking to find out.

The novel's real drama, however, revolves around Laura, as the title suggests. At first she comes across as gossipy and entertaining—superficial, yes ("Sergio's car is such a pretty color, I love that lilac; I wanted one that color but BMW doesn't make it"), and rude to the little people ("riffraff, my dear"), but goodhearted beneath it all. Only gradually does it become plain that her sense of what's normal is very different from the generally accepted sense, and when it does, the reader's recoil is almost physical. Corruption seeps from every pore of her perfect skin. She's so steeped in it that it's invisible, until certain unavoidable facts begin to surface.

The person Laura is most determined to defend from the persecution of Deputy Chief Handal is Gastón Berrenechea, nicknamed Yuca, a childhood friend and now "a VIP, you know, he owns a chain of superstores, and he's a deputy in the government and a high-ranking party official." Yuca was Olga María's lover, though things didn't go smoothly between them. Laura, playing the coy go-between ("I suggested he have a seat on the sofa next to me and tell me all about what had happened"), makes the unsettling discovery that Yuca has a problem with cocaine. But when gossip suggests that Yuca's involvement with drugs goes beyond personal use, Laura is wildly indignant.

Both Yuca and Laura play cameo roles in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

another novel, *El arma en el hombre* (The Human Weapon, 2001), yet to be translated, which is a kind of companion piece to *The She-Devil in the Mirror*. Besides providing some revelatory information about Yuca's drug connection, it tells the story of RoboCop, the killer for hire who shot Olga María. If Laura is the warped, glossy surface of Salvadoran society, RoboCop is the machinery beneath it. He learned his trade during the civil war, and when it ended he took work wherever he could get it. At first, he tries to maintain some semblance of loyalty to his army comrades, but he soon discovers that there are no sides anymore, just shifting alliances of old-money landowners, politicians and drug lords, among whom there is always someone willing to pay good money to have someone else killed.

El arma en el hombre, like *The She-Devil in the Mirror*, is a conspiracy theorist's delight, a kind of fairy tale of corruption (including lovely visions of poppy fields). Every murder is a sinkhole that leads down to some crime kingpin, and the network of connections is dizzyingly complex. And yet to invoke conspiracy theory suggests that crime is always some kind of puzzle complete with a solution, no matter how byzantine. What Castellanos Moya's novels really capture is a world in which answers are essential, but often surreal; in which a series of terrible crimes might lead to a drug lord but also to a crazy man in league with four lady snakes. His characters are people who have somehow internalized these circumstances and adapted to them, with disfiguring results, or who, like the protagonist of *Senselessness*, become nervous wrecks, every fiber of their being vibrating in apprehension of countless looming threats.

Castellanos Moya has turned anxiety into an art form and an act of rebellion, and redeemed paranoia as a positive indicator of rot. Despite his estrangement from his country and his merciless criticism of it, he has put El Salvador on the literary map, giving it an international existence independent from the front-page news. If the university in *El asco* is stripped of its literature department, Castellanos Moya has tried to restore it. And he has done so by patiently, repeatedly and inventively exposing the grotesqueness of attitudes and behavior that have become normalized in countries where brutality and corruption are daily fare. To read *Dance With Snakes* or *The She-Devil in the Mirror* is—in a small way—to understand how Castellanos Moya felt when he returned to El Salvador on the cusp of civil war: like an extraterrestrial in the country he called home. ■

JAMES WHITLOW DELANO/REDUX

Maghrebi women in Belleville, Paris, 2006

The New Inquisition

by LAILA LALAMI

Reflections on the Revolution in Europe
Immigration, Islam, and the West.
By Christopher Caldwell.
Doubleday. 422 pp. $30.

At a literary festival in New York City some years ago, I was introduced to a French writer who, almost immediately after we shook hands, asked me where I was from. When the answer was "Morocco," he put down his drink and stared at me with anthropological curiosity. We spoke about literature, of course, and discovered a common love for the work of the South African writer J.M. Coetzee, but before long the conversation had turned to Moroccan writers, then to Moroccan writers in France, and then, as I expected it eventually would, to Moroccan immigrants in France—at which point the French writer declared, "If they were all like you, there wouldn't be a problem."

His tone suggested he was paying me some sort of compliment, though I found it odd that he would want the 1 million Moroccans in his country to be carbon copies of someone he had barely met and whose views on immigration—had he asked about them—he might not have found quite to his liking. It was only later, when I had returned to my hotel room, that it dawned on me that the profile of the unproblematic Moroccan immigrant he might have had in mind was based solely on conspicuous things. Some of these, like skin color, were purely accidental; others, like sartorial choices or dietary practices, were in my opinion inessential, but from his vantage point perhaps they suggested a smaller degree of "Muslimness."

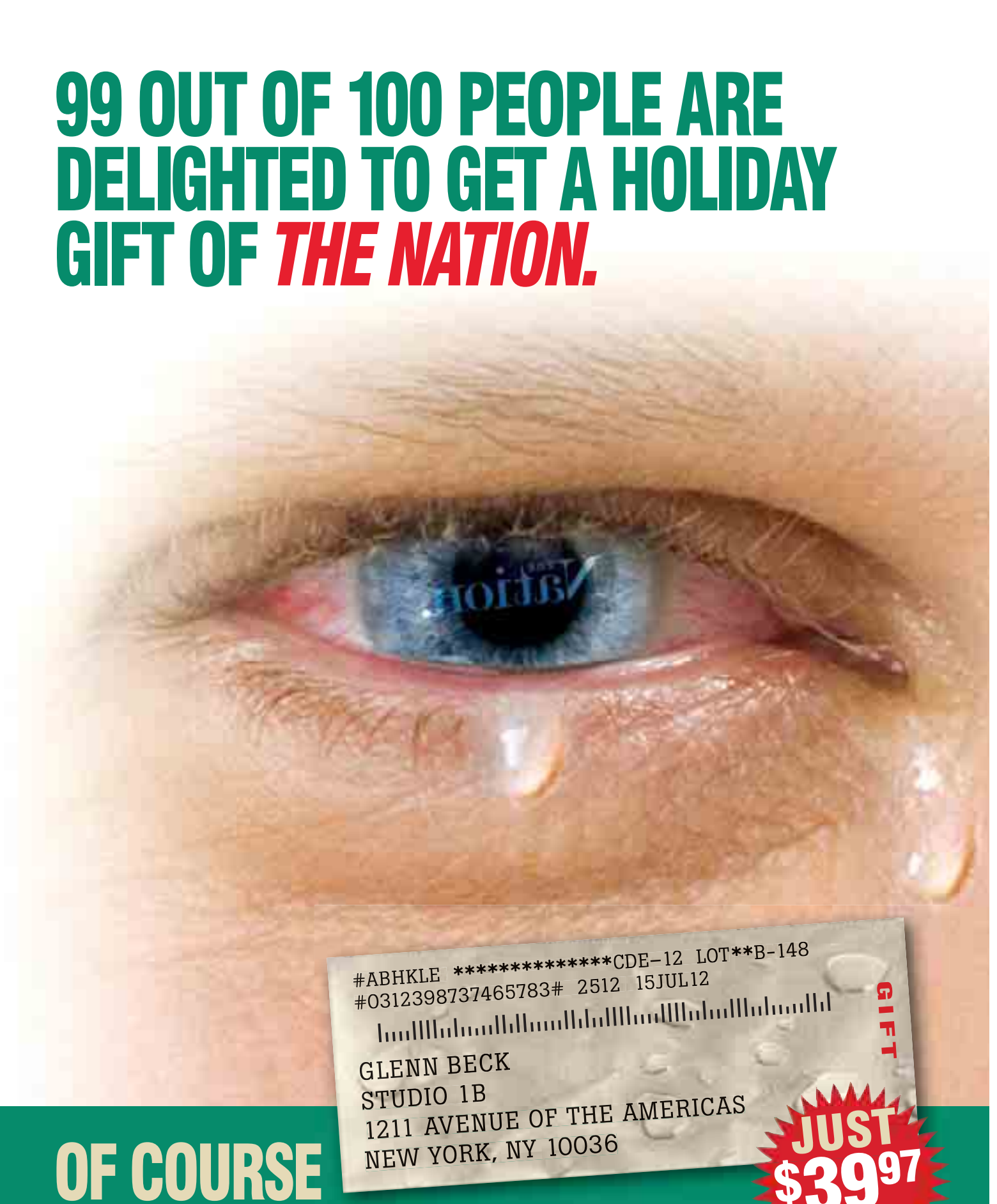
Was this man really suggesting that I was a more desirable immigrant because I did not look Muslim? We had started our conversation as two equals, two potential friends, two writers discussing literature, but we had ended it as judge and supplicant—the former telling the latter whether or not she would make a suitable immigrant. And why on earth did I not say something on the spot? Why did I not ask him what he meant? Instead, I had stared back at him with what I imagine was dumbfounded perplexity, and then changed the subject. Perhaps if I had confronted him I would have been able to remove the sting of the insult that had lain hidden inside the compliment.

In any case, the man's assertion was a purely theoretical speculation. In practice, there is little evidence that even inconspicuous Muslims are fully accepted in France, or elsewhere in Europe. This was made abundantly clear in September, when *Le Monde* released video footage from an encounter between Brice Hortefeux, the interior minister of France, and Amine Benalia-Brouch, a young Algerian-French activist. Hortefeux and Benalia-Brouch, who were both attending the summer congress of the center-right party Union pour un Mouvement Populaire, were asked to pose for a photograph. A female onlooker touched Benalia-

Laila Lalami, the author of Secret Son, *is an assistant professor of creative writing at the University of California, Riverside.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

99 OUT OF 100 PEOPLE ARE DELIGHTED TO GET A HOLIDAY GIFT OF *THE NATION.*



OF COURSE THERE IS THAT 1 IN 100...

JUST $39.97
A WHOLE YEAR 47 ISSUES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Brouch on the cheek and, in a voice ringing with approbation, said, "[Benalia-Brouch] is Catholic. He eats pork and drinks beer." "That is true," replied Benalia-Brouch, smiling. "He is our little Arab," the woman continued. Hortefeux added, "Very well. We always need one. When there's one, that's all right. It's when there are a lot of them that there are problems."

However offensive Hortefeux's statements may be, they are not particularly remarkable. In French politics, anti-immigrant posturing is something of a rite, often performed at the height of election season. When he was still mayor of Paris, and preparing to run for the presidency under the banner of the center-right party Rassemblement pour la République, Jacques Chirac bemoaned the plight of the "French worker," who was driven "mad" by "the noise and the smell" of the immigrant family next door, "with a father, three or four wives, twenty kids, taking in 50,000 Francs in welfare payments without working." After serving a term as president, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing took to the pages of *Le Figaro Magazine* to argue passionately that citizenship laws needed to replace the "right of land" (*jus soli*, automatic citizenship for those born on French soil) with the "right of blood" (*jus sanguinis*, citizenship determined through French ancestry). If such a distinction were not made, he warned, France would face "an invasion." The "right of blood" definition of citizenship, depending on how it is interpreted, could have ruled out the writer Alexandre Dumas, the footballer Michel Platini, the actress Isabelle Adjani, the physicist Marie Curie, the composer Maurice Ravel, the singer Charles Aznavour, as well as Nicolas Sarkozy, the current president of France, but perhaps Giscard d'Estaing felt his country could have done without any of them. (France eliminated the *jus soli* definition of citizenship in 1993 and then reinstated it in a limited form in 1997.)

In 2002 Manuel Valls, the mayor of Evry and a member of the Parti Socialiste, shot to national prominence when he tried to close down a halal supermarket because it did not carry pork or wine. He claimed the store had to "help us maintain some diversity." Two years before his election to the presidency in 2007, Sarkozy promised he would "hose down" the "scum" of the Paris suburbs, where many of the city's Muslims reside. Declarations such as these cut across party lines and constitute what the French press euphemistically calls *dérapages*, or blunders.

The reactions to the *dérapages* are also something of a tradition. Members of the offending politician's party rally behind him, while members of the opposition call him a racist. Meanwhile, leaders of the far right gloat that—at long last!—the mainstream is recognizing something they have been saying for years. After Chirac's infamous "noise and smell" comments, for instance, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the avowedly racist and anti-Semitic leader of the Front National, gleefully insisted that the French would always prefer "the original to a copy."

So it would seem that the perfect Muslim immigrant in France is one who cleans the house, picks up the trash, attends to the infant or, increasingly, fixes the computer, heals the sick and runs the bank, and then disappears in a wisp of smoke, before his presence, his beliefs, his customs, his way of dress, his "noise and smell" offend the particular sensibilities of the general population. France is not alone in wishing that its Muslims were invisible. As anyone who has visited Western Europe in the past few years will tell you, the "Muslim question" is a matter of grave concern.

European Muslims have unintentionally revived a whole genre of nonfiction—the alarmist tract, billed as a "searing" yet "necessary" exposé on Europe's impending demise now that it has allowed so many millions of Muslims to settle on its shores. The titles are each more ominous than the last: *The Rage and the Pride*, by Oriana Fallaci (2002); *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, by Bat Ye'Or (2005); *Londonistan*, by Melanie Phillips (2006); *Menace in Europe: Why the Continent's Crisis Is America's Too*, by Claire Berlinski (2006); and *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam Is Destroying the West From Within*, by Bruce Bawer (2006). The authors rely mostly on tabloid or newspaper accounts; the arguments are simple, or, more accurately, simplistic, and the preferred method of inference is extrapolation.

The latest offering in this genre is *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West*, by Christopher Caldwell, a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard* and a regular contributor to the *Financial Times*, *The New York Times Magazine* and many other publications. However, just as Chirac and Sarkozy prefer to say more carefully what Le Pen says bluntly, Caldwell articulates in polite and embellished language what Bawer and others have been saying aggressively for years: Europe is being overrun by Muslim immigrants; these immigrants show no sign of assimilating to European culture and social mores; and as a result, Europe is in danger of becoming an outpost of the Islamic empire.

According to Caldwell, European "political and commercial elites" invited immigrants to work on the continent in order to help rebuild the infrastructure that had been destroyed during World War II. These immigrants were expected to take up jobs in construction and, in later waves, jobs that were deemed too menial or too low-paying for "European natives." Immigrants revitalized industries like car manufacturing in the 1950s, but by the 1960s they were already propping up those, like textile mills, that were failing. Deindustrialization, combined with the 1973 oil crisis, resulted in the closing of factories and the loss of thousands of jobs. By then, the immigrants had already settled in Europe indefinitely, had married or brought spouses and had children. "Decade in, decade out," Caldwell writes, "the sentiment of Western European publics, as measured by opinion polls, has been resolutely opposed to mass immigration. But that is the beginning, not the end of our story."

That story, in Caldwell's telling, focuses on the Muslim communities of Europe. The plot involves the physical isolation of rapidly growing numbers of Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, Turks, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians in suburban neighborhoods; high rates of crime and imprisonment; misogynistic practices and anti-Semitic confrontations; and general cultural tensions with mainstream society. The story's climax is the Muslim minority's "demands" for concessions to its religion, laws and customs. The other characters in this high drama are the "self-loathing" European elites, who are in love with the idea of a multicultural society and who close their eyes to any negativity because they feel they have to atone for centuries of colonialism.

However, Caldwell argues, "immigration is not enhancing or validating European culture; it is supplanting it." European Muslims, he warns, are having children at a rate unmatched by the secularized natives. As of 2005, there were approximately 5 million Muslims in France; 3 million in Germany; 1.6 million in Britain; 1 million in Spain; and fewer than 1 million in the Netherlands and in Italy. All told, Muslims account for about 5 percent of the total population of Western Europe; but that may be 5 percent too many, because in Caldwell's estimation, "if one abandons the idea that Western Europeans are rapacious and exploitative by nature, and that Africans, Asians, and other would-be immigrants are inevitably their victims, then the fundamental difference between colonization and labor migration ceases to be obvious."

The comparison between labor migrations of the past fifty years and coloniza-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion—the most memorable example of which, in recent history, is European colonialism in Africa and Asia—leaves out such details as invasions by armed troops; the systematic expropriation of land; the exploitation of natural resources to the sole benefit of the settlers; genocide, as happened to an estimated 10 million Congolese; wars of independence that cost millions of lives; and the installation of brutal dictatorships. Unbelievably, Caldwell insists that the immigration of individuals, each one acting independently and for economic or political reasons, not in obeisance to a collective supranational policy or religious mission, is nothing short of colonization.

To continue with Caldwell's story, the Muslims of Europe—and, naturally, the elites who enable them—have led each major European country to a national tragedy: the London underground bombing; the Madrid commuter train attacks; the Paris riots; the murder of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands; and the cartoon crisis in Denmark. He concludes by sounding a pessimistic note on Europe's chances of winning this existential fight for its cultural survival. "Europe finds itself in a contest with Islam for the allegiance of its newcomers," he writes. "For now, Islam is the stronger party in that contest, in an obvious demographic way and in a less obvious philosophical way. In such circumstances, words like 'majority' and 'minority' mean little. When an insecure, malleable, relativistic culture meets a culture that is anchored, confident, and strengthened by common doctriness, it is generally the former that changes to suit the latter."

The assumption here is that Europe's culture was a rigid construct that remained unchanged until the immigrants arrived. But cultures are not static; they change all the time. Of course Europe's culture will change as a result of its demographic shifts, but that change need not (indeed, it should not) be turned into a culture war between Islam and the West. Caldwell's conclusion is also contradictory, coming as it does after 300 pages in which he has argued just the opposite: that Muslims are backward, unemployed, criminal and, until recently, disengaged from the political process. By the time he ends the book, they are suddenly and inexplicably strong enough to "conquer" Europe.

Reflections on the Revolution in Europe is the kind of book that will reaffirm the opinions of those who already agree with its author. If you happen to think that the establishment of what is now called "Eurabia" is a matter of time, you will find plenty of support in the many statistics and anecdotes Caldwell culls from newspaper and magazine reports. If, on the other hand, you prefer a more reasoned and complex view of the issues, the simplifications, contradictions and errors in this book will fail to persuade you. Caldwell repeats the thoroughly debunked canard that the 9/11 terrorist attacks were roundly celebrated in the Muslim world: "It was a day of joy in much of the Muslim world, including parts of Muslim Europe." On the contrary, there were demonstrations of solidarity with the families of the victims in nearly every major Muslim capital, from Rabat to Cairo to Tehran. More to the point, when the United States invaded Iraq, under the spurious claim that it possessed weapons of mass destruction and that Saddam Hussein had helped plot the 9/11 attacks, were the bombings not greeted with shouts of "U-S-A" in this country? That does not mean that the vast majority of Americans approved of the wholesale killing of hundreds of thousands of civilians. Simplifying the facts is expedient for Caldwell, however, as it helps bolster the argument he is trying to make, which is that Islam is locked in an inevitable and perpetual civilizational conflict with the West.

Although a large proportion of Europe's immigrants are not Muslim, and although the continent has faced serious economic, political and social challenges at various times over the past fifty years, European Muslims are held to blame for the rise in crime, violence against women, the resurgence of anti-Semitism and homegrown terrorism. For instance, Caldwell examines rates of incarceration in Europe, finds them proportionately higher for Muslims and attributes this finding to their religion and their culture, neither of which, in his view, equip them with the necessary tools for succeeding in the West. Missing from this grim assessment is the stubborn fact that Muslims are more likely than non-Muslims to be prosecuted for minor offenses. In France, where judges and prosecutors have large discretionary powers, noncitizens are significantly more likely to be forced into pretrial detention while their case is being investigated. The sociologist Devah Pager, who teaches at Princeton, also found a strong correlation between crime-control strategies in French local jurisdictions and the ethnic heterogeneity of these jurisdictions. To put it more plainly, crime is not policed in the same way for everyone. Researchers at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands found a similar pattern; they recently published the result of a study showing that Moroccans sit in jail for lighter crimes than ethnic Dutch.

At no time was the question of crime in Muslim neighborhoods debated more hotly than in the fall of 2005, when the Parisian *banlieues* erupted in riots that lasted three weeks, leading then-President Chirac to declare a state of emergency. The riots were triggered by the deaths of two teenage boys, Zyed Benna and Bouna Traoré, who, while fleeing the police, hid in a power station and were electrocuted. Initially, Sarkozy, at the time Chirac's interior minister, claimed that the boys were suspected of robbery, but there was no solid evidence that they committed a crime—they had been playing soccer in a field when they saw police officers and fled to avoid a lengthy process of interrogation. In interviews after the riots, the people of the *banlieues* often described the teenagers' deaths as a spark but cited as fuel discrimination, isolation and joblessness. The *banlieues* are ghettos, and as James Baldwin once wrote, "To smash something is the ghetto's chronic need." Though Pascal Mailhos, the head of the French national intelligence services, flatly stated that religious beliefs played no part in the riots, several French politicians blamed, persistently and exclusively, Islam. So does Caldwell: "Even if they did not believe in Islam, they believed in Team Islam." The point here, I suppose, is that Muslims are acting collectively even when they tell you they're not.

Caldwell also suggests that Muslims are far more likely to commit violence against women. Under the heading "Virginity and violence," he writes that "there were forty-five [honor killings] in Germany alone in the first half of the decade." Since the argument here is that Muslims are more inclined to commit homicides against women in the context of "some trespass against sexual propriety," it would have been helpful if Caldwell had included, for the sake of contrast, the number of ethnic German women killed in incidents of domestic violence, as well as numbers for an entirely distinct and recent immigrant group, such as Eastern Europeans. Without such empirical comparisons, it is difficult to see how he can reach the conclusion he does, which is that "such acts *make law*. They assert sovereignty over a certain part of European territory for a different sexual regime." The label "honor killing" makes violence against women and girls sound like an exotic import rather than the pernicious and all-too-frequent reality that it is. Caldwell doesn't mention that domestic violence has been treated as a criminal problem in Europe thanks to the work of European feminists in the 1960s and '70s, and that now European Muslim feminists are working to create a sim-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What Do Philosophy and Religion Reveal about Your Life?

Discover a wealth of fascinating insights into the meaning of our existence with these 36 lectures taught by an award-winning professor of philosophy from Georgetown University.

What is the meaning of life? Is human existence meaningful or absurd? Anyone who has pondered these fundamental questions has an exciting adventure in store with these 36 inspiring lectures.

In **Philosophy, Religion, and the Meaning of Life**, award-winning Professor of Philosophy Francis J. Ambrosio fields the biggest of the "big" questions in a boldly revealing inquiry into the greatest human concerns. He charts how the question of life's meaning has been pursued through the ages, highlighting the Western philosophical and religious paths in our search for answers.

The lectures lead you through the history and evolution of two Western traditions that continually address the question of meaning: Greek-derived Humanism and the Judeo-Christian/Islamic tradition. More centrally, you encounter two key metaphorical archetypes in the hero and the saint—found in people ranging from St. Augustine to Michelangelo to Mother Teresa—and track them as they react to change.

Philosophy, Religion, and the Meaning of Life also offers you a concrete context in which to pursue your own search for meaning—a way of questioning that makes philosophy itself a real and immediate way to address your most essential concerns. Join a masterful teacher in this engaging intellectual adventure that speaks deeply to an inspiring, creative dimension in living.

About Your Professor

Dr. Francis J. Ambrosio is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University. His teaching honors from Georgetown University include the Dorothy Brown Award for Outstanding Teaching Achievement and the Dean's Award for Teaching.

About The Teaching Company

We review hundreds of top-rated professors from America's best colleges and universities each year. From this extraordinary group we choose only those rated highest by panels of our customers. Fewer than 10% of these world-class scholar-teachers are selected to make The Great Courses®.

We've been doing this since 1990, producing more than 3,000 hours of material in modern and ancient history, philosophy, literature, fine arts, the sciences, and mathematics for intelligent, engaged, adult lifelong learners. If a course is ever less than completely satisfying, you may exchange it for another, or we will refund your money promptly.

About Our Sale Price Policy

Why is the sale price for this course so much lower than its standard price? Every course we make goes on sale at least once a year. Producing large quantities of only the sale courses keeps costs down and allows us to pass the savings on to you. This also enables us to fill your order immediately: 99% of all orders placed by 2 pm eastern time ship that same day. Order before January 2, 2010, to receive these savings.

© 2009 JupiterImages Corporation.

Lecture Titles

1. Meaning—A Question and a Commitment
2. Hero and Saint—Mapping the Cultural Genome
3. The Heroic Age—The Greek Worldview
4. Heroism and the Tragic View of Life
5. Plato—Politics, Justice, and Philosophy
6. Plato's *Republic*—The Hero's Reward
7. The Heroic Ideal in Late Stoicism
8. "In the Beginning"—The Hebrew Worldview
9. Father Abraham, the First Saint
10. Saintly Types in the Hebrew Bible
11. Jesus as Saintly Innovator—Forgiving Love
12. Hero or Saint? Saul of Tarsus
13. Hero or Saint? Augustine of Hippo
14. Mohammed—The Prophet as Saintly Innovator
15. Saint Francis and Dante—Saintly Troubadours
16. The Agony and Ecstasy of Michelangelo
17. Enlightenment Patterns of Cultural Mutation
18. Mt. Moriah Revisited—Saintly Transgression
19. A History of Suspicion—Marx, Darwin, Freud
20. Nietzsche—The Return of the Tragic Hero
21. Dostoevsky—The Return of the Saint
22. A Century of Trauma
23. The Quantum Leap
24. Existentialism—Sartre and de Beauvoir
25. Camus and the Absurd Hero
26. Flannery O'Connor and the Mystery of Grace
27. The Holocaust and the Crisis of Forgiveness
28. Faulkner and Beckett—Images of the Forlorn
29. Viktor Frankl—Freedom's Search for Meaning
30. Simone Weil—Imagining the Secular Saint
31. Simone Weil—A New Augustine?
32. Identifying the Secular Saint
33. The Secular Saint at the Movies
34. Ernest Becker—The Denial of Death
35. Terror and Hope in a Planetary Age
36. The Secular Saint—Learning to Walk Upright

THE TEACHING COMPANY®
The Joy of Lifelong Learning Every Day™
GREAT PROFESSORS, GREAT COURSES, GREAT VALUE GUARANTEED.™

SAVE UP TO $275
OFFER GOOD UNTIL JANUARY 2, 2010

1-800-TEACH-12 (1-800-832-2412)
Fax: 703-378-3819

Special offer is available online at
www.TEACH12.com/7ntn

The Great Courses®
THE TEACHING COMPANY®
4151 Lafayette Center Drive, Suite 100
Chantilly, VA 20151-1232

Priority Code 33115

Please send me **Philosophy, Religion, and the Meaning of Life**, which consists of thirty-six 30-minutes lectures plus Course Guidebooks.

- ☐ **DVD $99.95** (std. price $374.95) **SAVE $275!** plus $15 shipping, processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee
- ☐ **Audio CD $69.95** (std. price $269.95) **SAVE $200!** plus $10 shipping, processing, and Lifetime Satisfaction Guarantee
- ☐ **Check or Money Order Enclosed**

* Non-U.S. Orders: Additional shipping charges apply. For more details, call us or visit the FAQ page on our website.

** Virginia residents please add 5% sales tax.

Charge my credit card:

☐ VISA ☐ ☐ ☐

ACCOUNT NUMBER EXP. DATE

SIGNATURE

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

PHONE *(If we have questions regarding your order—required for international orders)*

☐ **FREE CATALOG.** Please send me a free copy of your current catalog (no purchase necessary).

Special offer is available online at www.TEACH12.com/7ntn
Offer Good Through: January 2, 2010

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ilar zero-tolerance level about honor killings. Encouragingly, a recent Gallup study found that Muslims in Paris, Berlin and London disapproved of honor killings and crimes of passion about as much as the general French, German and British populations.

One of Caldwell's frequent arguments is that Europeans should be worried about the Islamization of their continent because Muslim women are having children in greater numbers than non-Muslims. As proof for this claim, he cites a working paper from the Vienna Institute of Demography. But recent studies show that birthrates among European Muslim women are declining sharply; for instance, the fertility rate in the Netherlands for Moroccan-born women fell from 4.9 to 2.9 between 1990 and 2005. Turkish-born women had 3.2 children in 1990 and 1.9 in 2005. Similar patterns have been observed in France and Germany. Martin Walker, a senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center, points out that, "broadly speaking, birthrates among immigrants tend to rise or fall to the local statistical norm within two generations." Moreover, the *Financial Times*, the newspaper for which Caldwell is a columnist, recently published an article that belied all the alarmist claims about Muslim birthrates, concluding, "in short, Islamicisation—let alone sharia law—is not a demographic prospect for Europe."

The fundamental problem with *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* is that Caldwell focuses exclusively on the problems with Muslim immigrants without stepping back to assess the general status of the European Muslim community. While he frequently denounces idleness, urban separation and crime by Muslims, he does not see fit to devote any space to the discrimination they face in employment, housing or the justice system, or the successes they have had in fields like science, sports, arts and entertainment. The French even have a term for this wave of young successful Muslims; they call it *beurgeoisie*. (The word *beur* is French slang for "North African.")

This flaw in Caldwell's approach is, unfortunately, entirely intentional. *Reflections*, he writes in his introduction, is a book about Europe, immigration and the place of Islam and Muslims in it, not "a book about the difficulties faced by immigrants and ethnic minorities." He stresses that he will use the term "native" to refer to those of European blood and "immigrant" to refer to those who are from outside Europe, even when they have been citizens of European countries for two or three generations. But by simplifying his terminology and focusing exclusively on the problems immigrants *cause*, not on those they *face*, Caldwell has tilted the scales: he does not present a complete view of the relationship between immigrant and native. On the rare occasions (I counted two) when he does mention discrimination, it is to minimize it: "There was certainly measurable discrimination in the European job and housing markets, although it was mild alongside what one might have found in the United States four decades ago." How easy it is to dismiss discrimination when one is not on the receiving end of it. But the statistics on job discrimination defy minimization: while 27 percent of *beur* university graduates are unemployed in France, the overall unemployment rate for university graduates is just 5 percent.

Caldwell sees only evidence that confirms his beliefs and disregards everything else.

In effect, this lack of context mirrors the way Muslim immigrants (even those in second and third generations, or those who are probably Muslim in name only) are talked about in newspapers and magazines, on the radio and television: their religion is at the center of any discussion, as if the only thing that defines their political convictions, their votes, their relationship with their neighbors, with people of other religions or with members of the opposite sex is their ability to tell their *nisab* from their *khums*.

The thesis that only Islam is to blame for Muslims' supposed inability to assimilate in Europe is far too simplistic to stand the test of reality. In fact, it's just as simplistic as the argument peddled by the Muslim right wing, which is that Islam is the only cure for whatever ails Muslims. When one looks at Muslims on another continent (America, say) the pattern that Caldwell insists has been replicated throughout Europe (ghettoization, crime, violence against women, a resurgence of anti-Semitism, homegrown terrorism and demands for accommodation) does not obtain. In fact, income and education levels of Muslims in America mirror those of the general public. But save for two paragraphs, which appear ten pages before the end of the book, Caldwell avoids this comparison, presumably because it does not fit with his theory.

Caldwell does contrast Muslim immigration to Europe with Latin immigration to America. "The cultural peculiarities of Latin American immigrants," he argues, "are generally antiquated versions of American ones. Latinos have less money, higher labor-force participation, more authoritarian family structures, lower divorce rates, more frequent church attendance…lousier diets, and higher rates of military enlistment than native-born Americans." This, he says, makes Latino culture "perfectly intelligible to any patient American who has ever had a conversation about the past with his parents." But intelligibility did not prevent Glenn Beck from claiming that immigrants were "trying to conquer our culture" or Lou Dobbs from suggesting that the "invasion of illegal aliens" was responsible for a huge (and undocumented) rise in leprosy cases in the United States. The scholar Anouar Majid has cataloged many similarities between the treatment of Latino immigrants in the United States and Muslim immigrants in Europe in his book *We Are All Moors*. Ironically, Caldwell behaves much like a new convert to a religion: having found an ideology he agrees with, he looks only for the evidence that confirms his beliefs and disregards everything else.

Not surprisingly, Caldwell's assessment of Europe, like his assessment of European Muslims, leaves little room for nuance or complexity. He portrays the continent as a racially, culturally and politically homogenous place and its natives as extremely tolerant, respectful of human rights and largely secular. In his view, Europeans naïvely believed that Muslim workers who came after World War II would not stay. They welcomed the immigrants and muted their own concerns because they were afraid to be called racist. Caldwell makes the entire process of immigration seem like a giant hoax devious Muslims perpetrated on innocent Europeans. "European natives," he writes, "have become steadily less forthright, or more frightened, about expressing their opposition to immigration in public."

But the truth is that Europeans, particularly of the right-wing persuasion, have not been shy at all about opposing immigration. Anti-immigrant sentiment is as old as immigration itself, and Europe is no exception. Over the past few decades, immigration policy has repeatedly been a major theme of general elections in several European countries, including France, Italy and Spain. Still, the typical European one encounters in *Re-*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Special holiday offer!

There's nothing like Jitterbug.

If you're looking for the perfect holiday gift this year, consider the facts. Jitterbug is the first cell phone experience designed specifically to make calling easy. Starting with the Jitterbug J, we've partnered with worldwide leader Samsung to design a high-quality cell phone that takes the hassle out of calling with our Jitterbug EasyDial™ keypad and by eliminating complicated menus and confusing icons. Although many have tried to imitate the Jitterbug experience, they simply can't match our personalized services. Call our Jitterbug Operators day or night and talk to a real person based right here in the United States. We'll greet you by name, connect your calls, and even update your Phone Book with you on the line.[1]

Only our Jitterbug customers enjoy the freedom to choose from our helpful services like SimpleText Messaging, Roadside Assistance and no-questions-asked Handset Replacement. What's more, Jitterbug LiveNurse provides you with registered nurses, on-call anytime day or night, to answer questions and give you advice for your health and well-being. **LiveNurse has been awarded "Hottest Mobile Consumer Application" and for a limited time, is available free on our most popular plans.**[3] Our affordable rate plans start at just $14.99 per month,[2] and with all plans there are no contracts or termination fees. Jitterbug makes gifting easy, call today and we will include a free car charger with activation, a $24.99 value.[4] For more information, visit us online at jitterbug.com. Your friends at Jitterbug would like to wish you and your loved ones **Happy Holidays.**

Questions about Jitterbug?
Try our pre-recorded Toll-Free Hotline
1-877-778-0756

- Plans start at just $14.99 per month[2]
- No contracts, no termination fees, no prepaid hassles
- Jitterbug EasyDial™ keypad
- Powerful speaker delivers clear sound
- No complicated menus or confusing icons
- Live, 24-hour Jitterbug Operators greet you by name and update your Phone Book[1]
- Nights and Weekend Minutes

100% U.S. Based Customer Service

Also available in white.

FREE GIFT
Order now and receive a **FREE Car Charger** with activation, a $24.99 value![4]

CTIA 2009 HOT FOR THE HOLIDAYS HOTTEST MOBILE CONSUMER APPLICATION

Exceptional phone. Exceptional service.

Monthly Minutes	50	100	200	New
Monthly Rate	$14.99	$19.99	$29.99	New
Monthly Minute Carry Over	60 Days	60 Days	60 Days	New
Night/Weekend Minutes	—	—	500	New
Operator Assistance	24/7	24/7	24/7	
Long Distance Calls	FREE	FREE	FREE	
Nationwide Coverage	YES	YES	YES	

Other plans available. Ask your Jitterbug expert for details.

jitterbug®

Created together with worldwide leader Samsung. SAMSUNG

1-877-556-8365
Please mention promo code 39404
jitterbug.com

firstSTREET for Business and Beyond®
1998 Ruffin Mill Road
Colonial Heights, VA 23834

Subject to Customer Agreement, select calling plans and credit approval. Other charges and restrictions may apply. Screen images simulated. Coverage and service not available everywhere. [1] For each Operator service, you'll be charged a 5-minute "Operator assistance fee" in addition to the minutes used both for the length of the call with the Operator and any call connected by the Operator. [2] Not including government taxes, assessment surcharges and activation fee. [3] This service is free on Simply 29 and up plans. You must be an active Jitterbug customer to enroll. The Jitterbug LiveNurse Program brought to you in partnership with FONEMED should not be used in case of emergencies or as a substitute to dialing 911. FONEMED registered nurses assist with making health care decisions, but do not prescribe medications or diagnose. GreatCall is not liable for any act or omission, including negligence of any contracted health care professional. [4] This GreatCall offer is good with phone activation through 01/15/10. Prices and fees are subject to change. Copyright ©2009 GreatCall, Inc. Jitterbug is a registered trademark of GreatCall, Inc. Samsung is a registered trademark of Samsung Electronics America, Inc. and its related entities. Created together with worldwide leader Samsung. Typical plan information (most popular, not including family share plans) is based on marketing materials from nationally available cellular companies as of June, 2009. A53

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

flections is ashamed of his country and unable to stand up to immigrants. Caldwell writes, rather preposterously, "The singing of national anthems and the waving of national flags became, in some countries, the province only of skinheads and soccer hooligans." Elsewhere, he argues that European natives have become so enamored with the idea of multiculturalism that they "know more about Arabic calligraphy and kente cloth" than they know about "Montaigne and Goethe." Of course, this is hyperbole. But strikingly, Caldwell does not wonder how much European Muslims, a great many of whom are graduates of European schools on the continent or outside it, know about these subjects.

While Caldwell blames Muslim immigrants for a range of problems, he reserves part of his scorn for "the spiritual tawdriness" of Europe—which, in his estimation, may be the "biggest liability in preserving its culture." The increasing secularization of Europe caused it to lose its bearings and gradually become vulnerable to "colonization" by "primitive" cultures. "Along the road of European modernization," he writes, "lie the shopping mall, the pierced navel, online gambling, a 50 percent divorce rate, and a high rate of anomie and self-loathing. What makes us so certain that *that* Europeanization is a road that immigrants will want to travel?" But in fact polls show that attitudes of European Muslims vary from country to country and often display the same regional differences seen among various European publics. For instance, Gallup polls show that Parisian Muslims are more likely than Muslims in Berlin or London to consider adultery "morally acceptable," a pattern that mirrors the larger proportions of native French who find adultery acceptable when compared with Britons or Germans.

For Caldwell, there is a quality of "Europeanness" that, on the one hand, is in danger of being lost because of the mass immigration of Muslims, and, on the other hand, is so idiosyncratic that it is not easily passed to new generations of European Muslims. He appears to suggest that this quality is innate: "[EU expansion] raised hopes that Western European labor needs could be filled by people who more or less *thought* like Europeans (say, maids from Hungary and machinists from Bulgaria) rather than people who did not (say, maids and machinists from Pakistan and Algeria)." The emphasis is his.

Caldwell argues that intra-European immigration had a higher degree of success because the immigrants who moved within Europe shared religious and cultural beliefs with the natives. Such an optimistic view leaves out inconvenient facts of history. In the early decades of the twentieth century, France brought thousands of Polish workers to its factories and its mines; many lived in suburban ghettos and, despite being Christian, were deemed by the natives to be too attached to their culture and too religious (they were referred to as *calotins*, or "Holy Joes"). Some French intellectuals and politicians began speaking of "invasion." (Similar accusations were made about Spaniards, Italians and Belgians who later migrated to France.) When the recession of the 1930s put a crunch on the French economy, the government forcibly put Polish immigrants on trains and sent them back home. So the process by which immigrants integrate in European societies has historically been a slow one, even when immigrants "think" like Europeans.

This undiscerning approach leads Caldwell to severe errors of judgment. It is exceedingly disturbing to find so many right-wing leaders receive one form or another of rehabilitation in *Reflections*. The British conservative politician Enoch Powell—who famously warned that if Britain didn't stop letting in nonwhite immigrants, it would soon be "foaming with much blood"—is described as "morally" wrong but "factually" right. Elsewhere, Caldwell decries the Dutch media's portrayal of the far-right leader Geert Wilders as a "paranoid and sinister bumpkin," while those who speak more conciliatorily about Islam are "spared ridicule." Wilders once compared the Koran with *Mein Kampf* and proposed that it be banned. This past September, he argued that a tax of 1,000 euros should be levied against Muslim women who wear a headscarf because they "pollute" the landscape.

Pim Fortuyn, the notorious Dutch far-right leader, "was not a racist," Caldwell informs us, "and his colorful repartee about the Moroccan men he had slept with was adequate to place him above the suspicion of being one." By the same logic, should one forget that Strom Thurmond supported racist laws just because he had a black child? Caldwell writes wistfully that "Fortuyn could well have become prime minister had he not been shot dead days before national elections in May 2002, by an animal rights activist who claimed to be acting to protect Dutch Muslims." Even though Muslims had nothing to do with Fortuyn's murder, this formulation suggests that, somehow, they did.

Not coincidentally, several of the loudest forecasters of European doom were previously best known for their anti-Semitic views. Nick Griffin, the leader of the British National Party, once called the Holocaust an "extremely profitable lie." Nowadays, he asks that Muslims be prevented from flying into or out of Britain and runs ads with the slogan ENOCH POWELL WAS RIGHT. Vlaams Belang, the Flemish far-right party, has also had Holocaust deniers in its leadership, though now they seem most preoccupied with preventing Muslim women who wear the headscarf from working for local councils. And Le Pen, the founder of the French National Front, once described gas chambers as "a mere detail of history" and called a political opponent named Michel Durafour "Durafour *crématoire*" (the pun can be loosely translated as "Michel-hard-to-cook-in-a-gas-chamber"). Now he warns that it is only a matter of time before the mayor of Marseille will no longer be Mr. Gaudin but Mr. "Ben Gaudin." Recently it emerged that the Vlaams Belang and other far-right groups have formed a coalition called "Cities Against Islamisation." Europe has gone down this road before, and it did not emerge the better for it.

The societies of Europe are undergoing demographic changes, which have economic, social and educational consequences. So far, the debate on these changes has focused exclusively on Islam in Europe. Yet no one in the chattering classes seems to have noticed that the voices of European Muslims are seldom heard. This is a debate about them—not with them. And indeed *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* has been reviewed in the American press mostly by people who are not European, much less Muslim. Not surprisingly, the argument that Muslims are collectively trying to "conquer" Europe "street by street" in order to turn it into an outpost of Islam has been taken at face value. But this argument is not serious criticism because it is not based on thorough empirical evidence; it is racism.

When European Muslims are heard from,

William Shakespeare
BAWDY, LOVE, AND INSULT MUGS
and hundreds of other literary gifts for any occasion!
HALF THE PROCEEDS GO TO The Nation.
THE UNEMPLOYED PHILOSOPHERS GUILD
www.thenation.com/upg

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Brazil Expedition Uncovers Thousands of Carats of Exquisite Natural Emeralds

Brandish a whopping 50 carats of genuine South American emeralds in a handcrafted new necklace design for less than $200.....

and get a $100 Stauer Gift Coupon!

Halfway into our ambitious trek through the rain forest I had to remind myself that "Nothing good comes easy." These days it seems that every business trip to Brazil includes a sweltering hike through overgrown jungles, around cascading waterfalls and down steep rock cliffs. But our gem broker insisted it was worth the trouble. To tell you the truth, for the dazzling emeralds he delivered, I'd gladly go back to stomping through jaguar country.

Now our good fortune is your great reward. Don't miss this rare opportunity to own an impressive 50 carat strand of genuine South American emeralds for under $200. And for a limited time, we'll sweeten every necklace order with **a $100 Stauer Gift Coupon!**

Faced with this embarrassment of riches, our designer transformed this spectacular cache of large stones (each is over 8 carats average weight) into a stunning 50 ctw necklace of faceted emeralds set into .925 sterling silver. Each emerald is surrounded by delicate sterling silver rope work and filigree in the Bali-style. The 18" necklace dangles from a sterling silver chain that fastens with a secure double-sided shepherd's hook clasp.

What is the source of our emerald's timeless appeal?

The enchanting color of the Stauer ***Carnaval*** **Faceted Emerald Necklace** comes from nature's chemistry. Our polished and faceted, well-formed natural emeralds are immediately recognized as something special. Indeed, when we evaluated these emeralds, color was the most important quality factor. Today, scientists tell us that the human eye is more sensitive to the color green than to any other. Perhaps that is why green is so soothing to the eye, and why the color green complements every other color in your wardrobe.

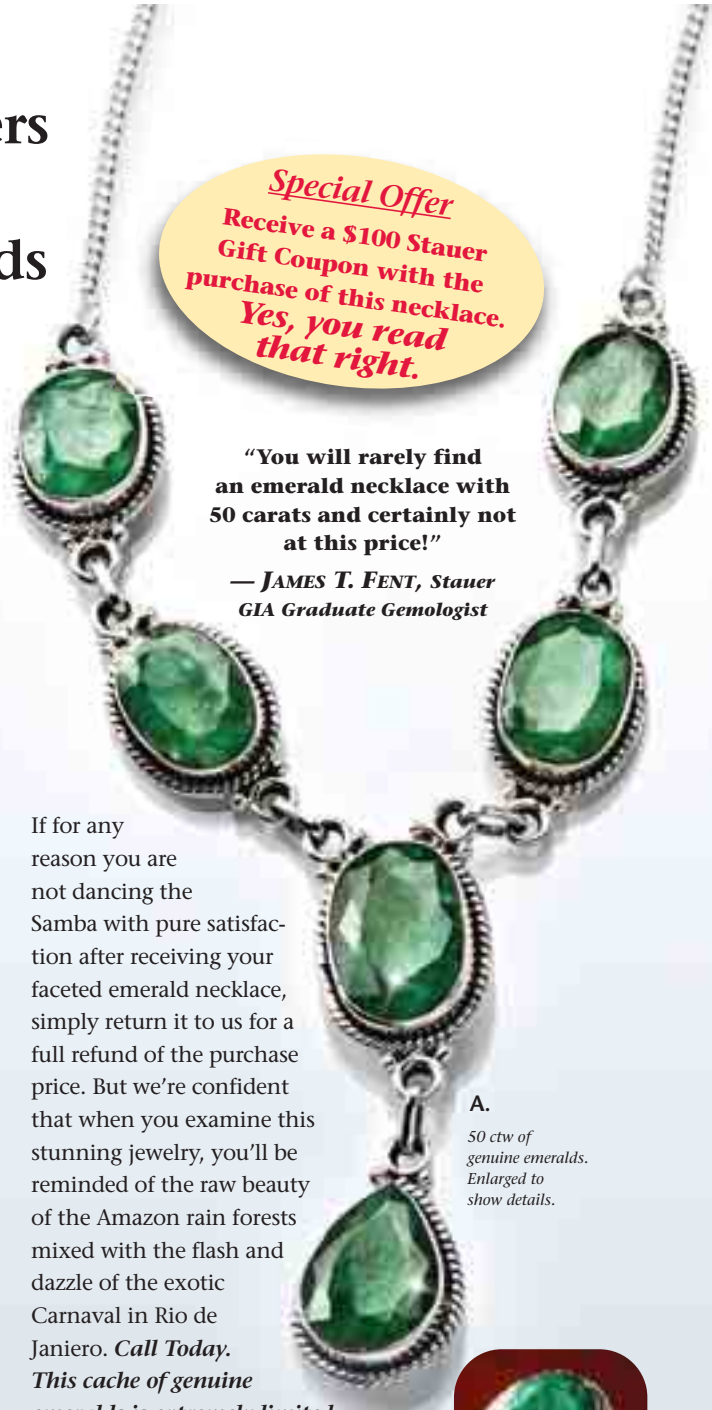
Emeralds are, by weight, the most valuable gemstone in the world.

Now you can wear genuine emeralds and feel great about knowing that you were able to treat yourself to precious gems without paying a precious price. A 100+ carat emerald necklace found on Rodeo Drive or 5th Avenue could cost well over $250,000…but not from Stauer. Wear and admire the exquisite Stauer ***Carnaval*** **Faceted Emerald Necklace** for 30 days.

Special Offer
Receive a $100 Stauer Gift Coupon with the purchase of this necklace. Yes, you read that right.

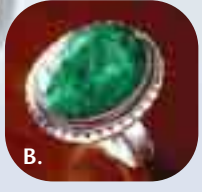
"You will rarely find an emerald necklace with 50 carats and certainly not at this price!"

— James T. Fent, Stauer GIA Graduate Gemologist



A. *50 ctw of genuine emeralds. Enlarged to show details.*

If for any reason you are not dancing the Samba with pure satisfaction after receiving your faceted emerald necklace, simply return it to us for a full refund of the purchase price. But we're confident that when you examine this stunning jewelry, you'll be reminded of the raw beauty of the Amazon rain forests mixed with the flash and dazzle of the exotic Carnaval in Rio de Janiero. ***Call Today. This cache of genuine emeralds is extremely limited.***



B.

C.

D.

A. ***Carnaval*** **Necklace** (50 ctw) **$195**
B. ***Carnaval*** **Ring** (13 ctw) **$125**
C. ***Carnaval*** **Earrings** (20 ctw) **$125**
D. ***Carnaval*** **Bracelet** (50 ctw) **$175**
Carnaval **Collection** (83 ctw) ~~$445~~
Includes necklace, ring and earrings.
Now only **$295** ***Save $150!***

******Special Offer*—Receive a $100 Stauer Gift Coupon with the purchase of each individual *Carnaval.*

1-888-306-7179

Promotional Code FEN169-02
Please mention this code when you call.

Stauer 14101 Southcross Drive W., Dept. FEN169-02 Burnsville, Minnesota 55337

Smart Luxuries—Surprising Prices

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it is often on the topic of religion, and usually immediately after some disaster caused by one of their co-religionists. Political leaders, eager to show that they are in dialogue with the "immigrants" (large proportions of whom are second- or third-generation citizens), quote from the Koran or invite some imam to tea at the presidential palace. The conversation turns into a battle over religion, over who has the right interpretation of what verse, instead of being expanded to the issues most relevant to the integration of European Muslims—issues like jobs, housing, education and civil rights.

The current debate places far too much emphasis on Islam as a set of codes and on the Koran as a literal text, rather than on Islam as it is lived and the Koran as an experienced text. A Moroccan man may be very devout and yet work as a sommelier in a restaurant in Paris. A Turkish teenager may not be particularly faithful and yet keep Ramadan because it is the only time of year she gets to connect with her community. An Algerian elder may be the imam of his mosque and yet carry credit card debt. Islam is not just its texts; it is millions of people, each one of whom has found an idiosyncratic way of adapting faith to modern life. Our religious beliefs are not the sum total of our lives. To discuss them as if they were puts our very lives up for debate.

The challenge of immigration is not Europe's alone. In our increasingly globalized world, immigrants are moving in all directions, across large distances and at faster rates than ever before. What Europeans—what all of us—need to face is the unavoidability of living together. Caldwell has culled two tercets from W.H. Auden's "The Quest" as the epigraph for his book:

> Could he forget a child's ambition to be old
> And institutions where it learned to wash and lie,
> He'd tell the truth for which he thinks himself too young,
>
> That everywhere on his horizon, all the sky,
> Is now, as always, only waiting to be told
> To be his father's house and speak his mother tongue.

Yet when I read *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, I was reminded of another poem, one Auden had written a year earlier, at the onset of World War II; and though the poet came to look with disfavor on the line, its truth is the one I would rather cling to: "We must love one another or die." ■

A Time Beyond Dreams

by ANDREW RICE

Nelson Mandela Square can be found in the Johannesburg suburb of Sandton, an asphalted enclave of vast shopping centers and tinted office blocks. A generation ago, during the era of apartheid, the *New York Times* correspondent Joseph Lelyveld likened the place's aesthetic to "Dallas-on-the-veld." It's only gotten wealthier, glassier and more garish since then, as South Africa has undergone a thoroughgoing metamorphosis. White rule has given way to black governance, repression has been replaced by tremulous coexistence, economic sanctions have fallen and Sandton has become, arguably, the nation's true nerve center. Corporations, banks and even the national stock exchange have moved there, taking flight from Johannesburg's decaying downtown. Though an air of danger looms over much of the city—South Africa's murder rate is six times that of the United States, and burglaries and carjackings are rampant—rich people, and especially rich white people, have found a relative haven in Sandton, hunkering down inside fortified luxury homes. Nelson Mandela Square is a centerpiece of the suburb, and by extension, this new South Africa. It is both a monument to a founding father, and, not secondarily, a well-guarded mall filled with expensive boutiques.

Malls occupy an important place in the social life of contemporary Johannesburg; in a walled and wary metropolis, they are precious islands of public space. On weekday evenings, the cafes that fringe Nelson Mandela Square's pleasant outdoor piazza, constructed atop a parking garage several stories above street level, are full of relaxing office workers and bargaining businessmen, whites and blacks united in South Africa's renewed common purpose, moneymaking. Looming over the brick expanse is a twenty-foot bronze statue of Mandela. The sculpture—a poor likeness, if truth be told—depicts South Africa's first black president in a clench-fisted pose, as if readying to box or dance. As they pass in and out of the mall, shoppers and tourists often stop to touch the statue. In their devotion, they have rubbed it shiny in patches.

The monumental figure of Mandela—a man once imprisoned as a terrorist and now venerated like a patron saint—cannot help but dominate any discussion of South Africa's contemporary history. Madiba, as he is affectionately called by his countrymen, turned 91 this year and is increasingly sheltered from the public eye. But he remains a living symbol of South Africa's great achievement. As I write, the nation is rushing to finish its preparations for the 2010 World Cup, an event that is likely to double as an international celebration of South Africa's peaceful transition from a white supremacist state to a multicultural democracy. From the far side of the abyss, it's worth casting a look back and reflecting on just how perilous this passage was. At the conclusion of his damning book *Move Your Shadow*, published in 1985, Lelyveld wrote:

> The question, it seemed to me, was not whether there would be violence in South Africa but whether there would ever be an end to it. There are lots of ugly possibilities of what could happen along the way to make self-fulfilling the whites' prophecies of disaster after power slips from their hands. There could be an Argentine-style junta, possibly with a brown or black front man, to bid for Western support. Eventually the whole society could implode on itself as in Northern Ireland or Lebanon. Or, worst of all for the present ruling minority, blacks could govern according to the values that whites have displayed. It is also possible to fantasize a reasonably open and stable society that, having removed the cancer of racial law, begins to fulfill the country's enormous promise as a model for Africa and the world. Those who

Andrew Rice is the author of The Teeth May Smile but the Heart Does Not Forget: Murder and Memory in Uganda *(Metropolitan).*

A Legacy of Liberation
Thabo Mbeki and the Future of the South African Dream.
By Mark Gevisser.
Palgrave Macmillan. 376 pp. $29.95.

Portrait With Keys
The City of Johannesburg Unlocked.
By Ivan Vladislavic.
Norton. 203 pp. Paper $14.95.

Bring Me My Machine Gun
The Battle for the Soul of South Africa From Mandela to Zuma.
By Alec Russell.
PublicAffairs. 312 pp. $26.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

now hold power have been hearing about that dreamy possibility from blacks, wayward whites, and interfering do-gooders from outside for decades, and occasionally now, to flatter the outsiders and themselves, they pretend to believe in it. But they don't, not for a moment. That is why apartheid existed in the first place and why it still survives.

At the time Lelyveld made this prognosis, many South Africans (black and white) presumed that apartheid might conceivably endure for decades. Instead, five years later Mandela was released from prison, and an improbable scenario began to unfold. Confounding the cynics, the African National Congress, Mandela's movement, took power through a process of negotiation, and governed compromisingly. In politics the party struck a tone of racial inclusiveness; in economics it favored a market-based pragmatism. As for dealing with past injustices, it created a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Over the course of a few heady years, Mandela won his divided nation's love and the admiring world's acclaim, making himself into an idol and an impossible act to follow.

When Mandela stepped aside in 1999, with a grace that has eluded so many other African leaders, he left behind some daunting items of unaddressed business. Foremost was his nation's staggering state of economic inequality, which compounded numerous other problems, including an AIDS epidemic, a crippling crime rate and lingering racial tensions. Such challenges would have tested even a leader of exceptional self-confidence and wisdom; but unfortunately for South Africa, the man who inherited Mandela's office, Thabo Mbeki, did not turn out to possess either quality in abundance. The Mbeki interregnum, a rough decade of uneven progress and societal unease, came to a dissolute end this past April with the election of a very different sort of president, Jacob Zuma: an earthy, populist and serially indicted ANC politician. Reflecting on Mbeki's fall and Zuma's rise, Mark Gevisser writes in *A Legacy of Liberation* that "South Africa now found itself in a time beyond dreams." Whether this represents an awakening or the start of a long, hard night is only just beginning to become clear.

In addition to being one of South Africa's most respected political writers—and a correspondent for this magazine—Gevisser has a multifaceted résumé: he's curated museum exhibitions, co-edited a book on gay life in South Africa and made a documentary about a communist theater director who was active in the ANC underground. He is, in other words, very much a fixture of South Africa's white liberal intelligentsia, a group that was morally liberated by the demise of the apartheid system. Now, two decades on, the joy is more tempered. When it was published in South Africa in 2007, Gevisser's book was titled *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred*.

There's a lot of South African literature about the white liberal intellectuals' agonies, for the same reason there are so many novels about professors of creative writing. Outraged and ostracized during the apartheid era, the liberals are now dispossessed; they got the country they hoped for, but it still doesn't fully belong to them. Race remains a defining characteristic. None of this is incidental to Gevisser's book, because in his telling, Mbeki is an emblematic figure. He somehow captures the two halves of South Africa's cultural heritage, European and African, within a single contradictory persona.

After the biography first came out, Gevisser writes in the prologue to the American edition—which is less than half the length of the 892-page original—Mbeki sent the author a letter insisting, in his gloating way, on his own inscrutability. "I belong among the uncelebrated unwashed masses," Mbeki wrote, "offering no rich pickings even for the most highly talented mind reader!" But Gevisser, calling on a vast amount of research, is able to assemble a compelling explanation of this most impenetrable persona, centered around what he describes as a "disconnect" within Mbeki's identity.

Gevisser is hardly the first to reach for this notion of disconnect; he writes that it was Mbeki who first used the word, in one of the several interviews the former president granted him for the book. Born in 1942 into the black petite bourgeoisie—his parents were members of a group called the *izifundiswa*, or "educated ones"—Mbeki was essentially abandoned as a boy by his father, Govan, who gave his life over to the ANC. As a young man, Thabo also joined the banned party, which became his surrogate family. He managed to escape from South Africa to Britain, where he attended Sussex University, then a stronghold of the cosmopolitan British left. He hung around with wayward blue bloods, took to wearing a tweed cap and smoking a pipe and had a succession of white girlfriends. Eventually, Mbeki married a politically appropriate woman, a black South African doctoral student, but he did so with a very English flourish. The ceremony was held in a twelfth-century castle in Surrey.

The Nation T-shirt Initiative

The Republicants

No compassion, No solutions

Order your Republi**cant** T-shirt today—makes a great gift. *Nation* Logo on the back. $20 plus S/H, available at www.theNationMart.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For the rest of his life, Mbeki would style himself a Shakespeare-quoting Anglophile, and reading Gevisser's book, you get the feeling that he would have been much happier if he had stayed in Britain and become a professor. But that side of his personality never stood a chance—he was Govan Mbeki's son. A legend of the ANC, the elder Mbeki was cold and resolute in his commitment to the movement, qualities that he seems to have passed down. In 1963, when a young Thabo Mbeki was told of his father's arrest, which would ultimately lead to twenty-three years of imprisonment, he is said to have given a bloodless reply: "The revolution produces leaders all the time." Govan's jailing was just one of many Mbeki family tragedies—a brother of Thabo's disappeared under murky circumstances, as did a college-aged son—all of which seem only to have redoubled the family's commitment to the struggle against apartheid. "They believe in politics [more] than real life," the wife of the Mbeki brother who went missing tells Gevisser.

From his university days, Mbeki was groomed for leadership in the ANC, and there was never any question that after graduation he would return to take a place among the leaders of the party, which was then based in Zambia. At the time, the ANC was an armed movement, tightly aligned with the South African Communist Party, backed by the Soviet Union and steeped in liberationist doctrine. Gevisser, who was able to visit the ANC's Zambian headquarters as a reporter in the early 1990s, writes that the atmosphere of exile was "fractious, apprehensive, and suspicious, articulated in a language of shadows and circumlocutions." The big secret—which was actually well-known to the apartheid regime's spies—was that the ANC was a pathetic military organization. It was the professorial Mbeki, never much of a soldier, who boldly argued that he could persuade the ANC's adversary, a nuclear-armed government, to give up without a fight.

Gevisser calls Mbeki "the seducer," and describes all the surreptitious maneuvering behind the apartheid government's shocking decision to release Mandela and open negotiations. Mbeki, along with his trusted ally Jacob Zuma, the intelligence chief of the ANC's military wing, laid the groundwork for the peaceful transition through numerous back-channel meetings. (These encounters were riveting enough to be dramatized in the recent television movie *Endgame*, produced in Britain and aired here on PBS, with the British actor Chiwetel Ejiofor delivering a smoldering performance as Mbeki.) When Mandela won the presidency in 1994, in an election that was more like a coronation, he made Mbeki his principal deputy and day-to-day manager. But the habits that had made Mbeki so successful during the cloak-and-dagger exile era hampered him as a public figure. "Mbeki might have modernized the ANC with extraordinary vigor when it came to ideology and economic policy," Gevisser writes, "but he would hold to the exile's understanding of politics—and the outlawed freedom fighter's experience of intrigue—throughout his years of power."

As early as 1994, according to Gevisser, Mbeki anonymously wrote a paranoid intra-party memorandum warning that sinister forces, including sections of the liberal establishment and the white-dominated media, were working against the new leadership, to the benefit of Cyril Ramaphosa, Mbeki's main rival for power within the ANC. In 2002, after Mbeki had assumed the presidency, these suspicions would blossom into what Gevisser calls "preposterous allegations" that Ramaphosa and two other high-ranking ANC members were engaged in a coup plot. The conspiratorial vein of Mbeki's personality, Gevisser argues, also tainted public policy and was ultimately responsible for the most unfortunate episode of his presidency: his campaign against mainstream AIDS science. Having come under the sway of some crackpot scientists, Mbeki wrote a long, unsigned screed suggesting that the accepted understanding of the disease's transmission was connected to "centuries-old white racist beliefs" about the sexual voracity of black men. He steered his government toward an AIDS policy that discouraged the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs, a folly that is estimated to have cost 365,000 lives.

When Mandela—who'd largely ignored the AIDS crisis during his time in office—tried to push his successor in a more constructive direction, Mbeki made sure he was given a humiliating admonishment at an ANC leadership meeting. Mbeki had come to deeply resent his predecessor, whom he considered his intellectual inferior, and was particularly chagrined by the fawning approval that the beloved Madiba received from white audiences around the globe. "Mbeki called this attitude 'Mandela exceptionalism' when he was being polite," Gevisser writes, "the 'one good native' syndrome when he was not." Much more than Mandela, who spent most of his adult life in prison, Mbeki shared the experiences, cultural references and worldview of South Africa's liberal intelligentsia. Yet by the end of his second term, seduction had soured into alienation. Remarkably, many of those who'd once looked at Mbeki as a thinking man's president, one-time supporters both white and black, were speaking hopefully about the "fresh start" that might come with Jacob Zuma, a street fighter who had only learned to read and write as an adult.

I should mention that I am very slightly acquainted with Gevisser. Last year, when I went to South Africa to write a profile of Zuma for another magazine, I got in touch with the journalist through a mutual friend, and he agreed to meet me at a cafe in the Johannesburg neighborhood of Melville. A generous type, he shared his perspective, suggested a few sources, recommended some restaurants and told me he liked Melville because it was one of the few areas of the city that hadn't become completely enclosed by high walls. Then he mentioned, in a sort of offhand way, why he'd been slow about replying to a recent e-mail. In the dead of night, intruders had broken into his house and stolen his laptop, along with some other valuables. He said he was just glad he hadn't woken up, because then he might have interrupted the burglary and gotten himself killed.

In today's South Africa, you hear stories like this all the time: in the tabloid newspapers, passed around at dinner parties, retold as cautionary tales when a visitor suggests something foolhardy, like walking a short distance at night. If it's not the most crime-ridden nation in the world, in a strict statistical sense, it must be the most crime-preoccupied. As in many other countries, including the United States, the crime discourse isn't just about crime: if you look at things crudely, you can call it a proxy for race, but black South Africans—who represent the majority of victims—are just as fed up. It'd be more accurate to say that talk of crime is shorthand for larger worries about a gathering communal breakdown, the foundering ideal of a colorblind and civil society.

Portrait With Keys, by the novelist and short-story writer Ivan Vladislavic, is an extended meditation on this theme, set in Johannesburg, his home for the past three decades, a city that he loves and mourns. It's an odd book, a collection of 138 scenes, essays and epiphanies, most of them about a page long, and not arranged in any definitive order, as if they were shards of something shattered. In the back of the book, there's an appendix suggesting various "itineraries" a reader can take through the fragments, like one of those "Choose Your Own Adventure" books I used to read as a boy. But every route returns to a note of loss. "The city is passing away," a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Nation

2nd Annual Online Auction

"GO SHOPPING."

That was the Bush era's misguided solution to a deepening recession. Unfortunately, the rest is history.

Instead of buying your loved ones holiday gifts that enrich the corporate establishment, why not share your passion for progressive journalism by bidding on an item in **The Nation** second annual online auction.

We're auctioning some incredible relics from 144 years of publishing, plus some chances to connect with **The Nation** in person and dozens of unique items donated by our readers and friends. You'll feel good knowing that all proceeds from the auction will go toward keeping **The Nation** free of corporate influence.

Celebrate the holidays in a way that doesn't have to contradict your progressive beliefs. Get a jump on your holiday shopping and feel good knowing that every dollar raised from the auction will help **The Nation**.

Here are some of the items we're auctioning off:

- Mensa Assessment
- Political Campaign Buttons
- Original political cartoons
- Vintage photographs
- Lots of autographed books
- 2010 Bermuda Cruise tickets including lunch with Victor
- Lunch with Katrina at the Union Square Cafe
- Sonoma Vineyard Afternoon
- Stay in Cuernevaca vacation house
- Free Blues Show
- Guest visit on political talk show
- Mendocino Coast Inn Weekend

Thank you to this year's generous auction sponsors

Green Diamond Tires
www.greendiamondtire.com

The Unemployed Philosophers Guild
www.thenation.com/upg

THENATION.CMARKET.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

friend of the author remarks in one scene, as he proposes an artistic scheme for a "wall of remembrance" made of donated commonplace objects.

Portrait With Keys is the same thing, in written form. Vladislavic, at least as he presents himself in the book, is something of a *flâneur*. He wanders the city, observing castoff moments, combing through junk shops, talking to tramps, taking pleasure in the discovery of hidden places. He is a keen observer of the afterlife of manufactured things. Johannesburg, he points out, is a man-made creation, more so than most cities: built atop mines dug during the Witwatersrand Gold Rush of the 1880s, dotted with false lakes and hills formed from discarded slag. "Commissioner Street, the backbone of Johannesburg, follows the old wagon track between two of the first mining camps," Vladislavic writes. "So the city's spine was fused to the gold-bearing reef that called it into life."

Gold also had much to do with the creation of the artificial barriers of apartheid. The whites that populated South Africa—the Afrikaners, descendants of early settlers who spoke a language related to Dutch, and later the English, who fought wars to colonize the territory—wanted the gold for themselves, but they always needed black labor to extract it. The hardline National Party, which ruled from 1948 until 1994, came to power warning of a "black menace," and over the years put together a system of restrictive pass laws to keep the country's low-paid workforce in line. At the height of apartheid, nonwhites held 58 percent of South Africa's jobs in manufacturing and 90 percent in mining. Blacks lived in segregated townships or rural "homelands," where they endured conditions of dire poverty, unable to move freely or participate meaningfully in politics.

The political inequities of apartheid have been abolished, but the economic ones are more persistent. As of 2006, 43 percent of the South African population lived on less than $400 a year—a number that has hardly budged since the end of apartheid. Thabo Mbeki presided over a period of fast economic growth, propelled by worldwide demand for South African metals and other commodities, but the benefits of that boom have not been evenly distributed. Once again, the tensions do not break down along simple racial lines. One of Mbeki's major accomplishments was the enlargement of the black middle class. In Soweto, the famous Johannesburg township, upwardly mobile residents have erected suburban-style brick homes next to tin-roofed shanties. But a great many more blacks complain that freedom has brought little real improvement to their lives. Now that the economy has taken a sharp downward turn with the global financial crisis, the unemployment rate has reached almost 24 percent, according to official statistics, which don't count a massive number of people who have given up looking for work.

The frustration of this underclass erupted into last year's xenophobic riots in the townships, as well as the strikes and violent protests that have taken place with increasing frequency as the economy has worsened. White intellectuals like Vladislavic are for the most part bystanders to the social unrest, unable to influence the opaque inner workings of the ANC, the only viable political party. A number of writers—J.M. Coetzee being the most famous example—have chosen to leave South Africa, joining a wave of middle-class emigration to Europe, the United States and Australia. ("Just about everyone I talk to is weighing his options," a well-connected—and black—magazine editor told me last year.) But Vladislavic has stayed on to consider his dislocation.

"I live in a city that resists the imagination," Vladislavic writes, comparing Johannesburg to Dickens's London, longing for a lost era when it was safe to wander and absorb the street life. "A stranger, arriving one evening in the part of Joburg I call home, would think that it had been struck by some calamity, that every last person had fled. There is no sign of life. Behind the walls, the houses are ticking like bombs."

But walls are a sad necessity in today's South Africa, at least for those who can afford them. (*The Economist* reports that private security is a $2 billion industry, and the country has 300,000 registered security guards.) In the scene that inspired the book's title, Vladislavic describes the regalia of isolation: his enormous chain of seventeen keys, "their profiles facing in the same direction, like a dressed file of soldiers." Later, he recounts a dinner party where all the guests compare their key chains and enumerate the many locks in their lives. But even the tightest precautions can't assure safety. With deadpan detachment (this is a very passively voiced book), Vladislavic describes an encounter, by turns terrifying and bizarrely comic, with a pair of daylight robbers in his home. He writes about small acts of defiance, like placing a wrench dropped by another foiled burglar beside a fireplace, "less as a trophy than a measure of everyday abnormality."

The book is full of portents that senseless violence is closing in, such as when Vladislavic sees a group of miners, in an offhand act of cruelty, throw a drunkard to the ground without warning, "an act of such explosive volition that his feet shoot out like a clown's and one slapstick shoe goes flying." Finally, in the book's climactic scene, Vladislavic inadvertently walks into a protest by a group of striking private security guards, which suddenly turns into a riot. Scrambling to shelter in a library, the wanderer picks out something to read, tending his own garden until the scene quiets down.

But the commotion in South Africa only keeps building, and over the past two years it has seemed to find its avatar in the person of Jacob Zuma. That, at least, is the way it has often looked from afar, to an outsider trying to follow a bewildering chain of events. The story line goes roughly like this: In 2005 Zuma was accused of taking kickbacks in connection with an arms deal, and consequently was ousted from his powerful position as deputy president of the nation. That set him against his former friend Thabo Mbeki, which turned out to be fortunate, because it allowed him to play the foil to an unpopular president. When Zuma was arrested on a second charge, for allegedly raping an HIV-positive family friend, his supporters howled that Mbeki's men had framed him. A series of trials ensued, less notable for their outcomes (Zuma won a controversial acquittal on the rape charge, while the corruption case dragged on interminably) than for the carnival of protest that traveled with the defendant from courthouse to courthouse. As Zuma's guilt was considered, throngs of supporters would often gather outside, chanting, beating drums and burning his accusers in effigy.

Alec Russell's *Bring Me My Machine Gun* takes its title from a revolutionary song that has become an anthem for Zuma, who often led courthouse crowds in singing raucous renditions. Russell, a correspondent for the *Financial Times*, recounts how Zuma "used the courtroom as a political stage, stressing his Zulu roots" and turned a moment that should have been his undoing into a popular triumph. "Mbeki agonized over what it meant to be an authentic African leader," Russell writes. "Zuma had to do no such thing: he was one. He was the ultimate modern tribal chief, a man who would listen to his people, who understood their concerns, and who would not necessarily let the niceties of Western political convention impede his plans."

When I last visited South Africa, in 2008, the most promising democracy on the continent was in the midst of a strange presidential campaign, one that was being fought not at the ballot box but in back rooms and court-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rooms. In order to witness the spectacle, I went to see Zuma fight his corruption indictment before the Constitutional Court, the country's highest, which sits on the hilltop grounds of a decommissioned Johannesburg prison that once held many of the ANC's leaders. Zuma's lawyers were challenging the legality of a police search that had uncovered more than 93,000 documents, evidence that added up, in Russell's assessment, to "a straightforward commercial criminal case." The politics of the proceeding were anything but simple, though, because by this point Zuma had already wrested the leadership of the ANC away from Mbeki in a bitter internal party election. As he faced eleven green-robed justices of various races, Zuma knew that he would soon be president, if he could just manage to stay out of jail.

There were no courthouse protests the day I visited, just a bored complement of cameramen milling around the entryway doors. Inside, in a courtroom that had been constructed in an avant-garde style, with large windows and skylights designed to emphasize the transparency of South Africa's reformed legal system, Zuma sat quietly in a dark blue suit as his attorney argued that he'd been the victim of "appalling behavior" on the part of the police. During recesses, I could look down from the press gallery and see him sharing a deep belly laugh with Jessie Duarte, a spokeswoman for the ANC, and a group of dapper white lawyers. After the chief justice gaveled the hearing closed, Zuma bustled out of the courtroom, escorted by a pushy security cordon into the back of a black BMW. I did not feel like I'd encountered a rabble-rouser, or a scourge, or a "modern tribal chief," but rather something profoundly unexotic: an embattled party hack.

Zuma has assiduously worked to cultivate his African "authenticity," appearing in public dressed in leopard skins and entering into a series of publicized polygamous marriages. And members of the international press corps—including, I have to admit, myself at times—have been more than willing to play along, because it all fits into a familiar narrative: mass discontent gives rise to a Big Man in Africa. But this populist image is of a fairly recent and conveniently timed vintage; back when he was allied with Mbeki, Zuma was considered a colorless moderate. If Zuma is an authentic expression of anything besides his own ambition, it's the present state of the ANC. The tragedy of today's South Africa is not the emergence of a demagogue but the degeneration of the liberation movement.

"Party officials liked to regard themselves as high priests of some venerable cult and to pretend that the party never engaged in competitive internal politics," Russell writes, but his book convincingly demonstrates that precisely the opposite is true. The ANC has always been factionalized, but during fifteen unchallenged years in power, old ideological divisions have been replaced by more craven calculations. Under Mbeki, a government policy of "Black Economic Empowerment," supposedly designed to right the inequalities fostered by apartheid, became a vehicle to transfer fantastic wealth to a favored coterie within the party elite. "And yet anyone outside the ANC who talked about the corruption of the party faced accusations of disloyalty—if black, Indian, or of mixed race—or, if white, racism," Russell writes. The sins alleged in Zuma's bribery indictment took place in the larger context of this internal competition for spoils, which also created resentments that were to fuel his ascent. (His "insurgent" campaign to take control of the party was backed by several ANC tycoons who'd fallen out with Mbeki.) True, Zuma also had the support of left-wingers and union leaders. "But they were as much the foot soldiers in a party putsch," Russell writes, "as the standard-bearers of a revolution."

Zuma's loyalists ultimately forced Mbeki

RSF SOCIAL SCIENCE THAT MATTERS

CHANGING POVERTY, CHANGING POLICIES
MARIA CANCIAN AND SHELDON DANZIGER, EDITORS
$42.50 Paper

eTRUST
Forming Relationships in the Online World
KAREN S. COOK, CHRIS SNIJDERS, VINCENT BUSKENS, AND COYE CHESHIRE, EDITORS
$55.00 cloth

EVANGELICALS AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, VOLUME I
Religion and Society
STEVEN BRINT AND JEAN REITH SCHROEDEL, EDITORS
$49.95 cloth

EVANGELICALS AND DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA, VOLUME II
Religion and Politics
STEVEN BRINT AND JEAN REITH SCHROEDEL, EDITORS
$49.95 cloth

GENDERED TRADEOFFS
Family, Social Policy, and Economic Inequality in Twenty-One Countries
BECKY PETTIT AND JENNIFER L. HOOK
$39.95 cloth

IMMIGRANTS AND WELFARE
The Impact of Welfare Reform on Ameria's Newcomers
MICHAEL FIX, EDITOR
$45.00 cloth

INHERITING THE CITY
The Children of Immigrants Come of Age
PHILIP KASINITZ, MARY WATERS, JOHN MOLLENKOPF, AND JENNIFER HOLDAWAY, EDITORS
$55.00 cloth

LOW-WAGE WORK IN THE WEALTHY WORLD
JÉRÔME GAUTIÉ AND JOHN SCHMITT, EDITORS
$45.00 cloth

UNVEILING INEQUALITY
A World-Historical Perspective
ROBERTO PATRICIO KORZENIEWICZ AND TIMOTHY PATRICK MORAN
$37.50 cloth

WHOM CAN WE TRUST?
How Groups, Networks, and Institutions Make Trust Possible
KAREN S. COOK, MARGARET LEVI, AND RUSSELL HARDIN, EDITORS
$55.00 cloth

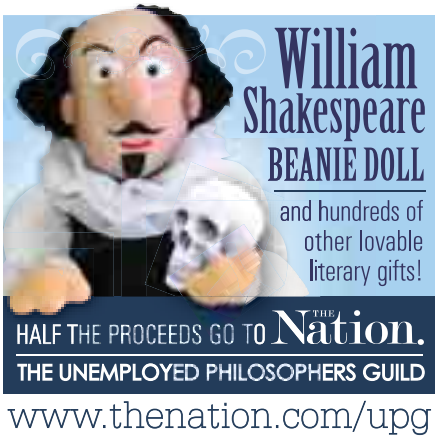
Russell Sage Foundation
112 East 64th Street
New York, NY 10065

AT BOOKSTORES NOW OR TO ORDER CALL 1-800-524-6401 OR VISIT US ON THE WEB AT WWW.RUSSELLSAGE.ORG

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to resign the presidency and installed a pliant caretaker. Prosecutors, under heavy government pressure, abandoned the corruption case. Though some embittered Mbeki supporters bolted from the ANC to form a splinter party, April's election was a mere formality. Since taking over the presidency, Zuma has not radically altered government policy: there has been a slight shift in tone, some new faces in the cabinet and a few cronies stationed in influential places, such as at the head of the intelligence service. (As a former spy master, Zuma appreciates the political value of secrets.) He's striven to reassure various interest groups, contradicting himself at times, and has made crowd-pleasing pronouncements, such as suggesting that police officers should be empowered to shoot criminals on sight. While some of the more ideological segments of his coalition are expressing disappointment that he's done little tangible for the left, formerly skeptical voices have expressed pleasant surprise about an administration that has been, in the words of *The Economist*, "notably pragmatic."

It's still early, though, and "it could have been worse" is not much of a governing justification, not in a country that faces societal challenges on the scale of South Africa's. When I last saw Mark Gevisser, at a New York lecture in May, shortly after Zuma's inauguration, he sounded downcast about the future of the ANC, which he said had become "fat and arrogant." Much to his distress, he'd found himself, for the first time in his life, unable to vote for the party of liberation. Yet he saw some reason for hope. "No one thinks Zuma is a god," Gevisser told his audience. Mandela was a patriarch, Mbeki a princeling, but the third elected president of the new South Africa is a politician, nothing more and nothing less. It's not the stuff of dreams, but it's a reality most democracies live with. South Africa managed to undo apartheid; it should be able to withstand a mediocrity. ■



www.thenation.com/upg

Exchange

(continued from page 2)

Of course, I had my say at great length in my book. Fraser's emphatic, informed review serves the valuable purpose of continuing a discussion of the origins of corporate capitalism.

T.J. Stiles

Fraser Replies

New York City

T.J. Stiles assures *Nation* readers that he, like them, has "sympathy with wage workers." Thank goodness *The Nation* exists, because there are few places left, he laments, where such sentiments get aired nowadays. How true! But one place that doesn't have room for that warm-heartedness turns out to be Stiles's own book. He gives the game away near the end of his letter when he explains that he decided that matters like "labor relations" and "workplace safety" were "outside the confines of my biography."

That is the real point. It's not a question of "sympathy" for the downtrodden. The question is what a historian selects as important. The burden of my criticism of *The First Tycoon* is that to understand what the rise of industrial capitalism was about, whether pioneered by Vanderbilt or others, the reader needs a textured look at how it rested on the conversion of millions of people into wage laborers and how that experience transformed their lives. There is no capital without labor, no "First Tycoon" without the legions of working people he employed. But, Stiles insists, the Commodore didn't have time to pay attention to such matters as the occasional amputation or fatality, or more basic "labor relations." Odd, because industrialists of his ilk had to. Whether true or not, we are left to wonder why Stiles decided it should escape the "confines of my biography."

Perhaps because it would spoil the heroic story he wants to convey about the misunderstood robber baron. Stiles says I find him guilty of too much reverential prose about his subject. He objects when I note that he conflates dynastic and corporate capitalism in order to gild Vanderbilt's reputation as a "pioneer [in] the rise of the truly gigantic business corporation." Stiles says he's aware of the distinction between the dynast and the corporate suit. No doubt. But it is also Stiles who cites Alfred Chandler's classic book on the rise of the modern bureaucratic corporation (*The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business*) to support the notion that Vanderbilt was among its foremost architects. However, this curious reviewer consulted Chandler's book and found only five glancing references to the Commodore, none of them remotely confirming Stiles's use of the book. What's happening here is an inflation of honors. Stiles objects to that claim in my review. What is one to make, however, of a panegyric for Vanderbilt's corporate dealings that singles them out as "acts of imagination" in "a world of the mind, a world that would last into the twenty-first century," a world in which stocks "could be played like a flute," "abstracted into a substanceless something" so pathbreaking that "even the most sophisticated thinkers refused to accept that stock could be increased at will, or that the market alone should determine the value of a share"? A wonderful turn of phrase that "substanceless something," a realm where one need not ponder overmuch those more substantial realities like rickety rolling stock, farm foreclosures and harried brakemen that buoyed up stock increasing "at will."

Most important, according to Stiles, is the unfair way I criticize his treatment of liberal reformers. I make note of what an undemocratic-minded lot they were (including the founder of *The Nation*), so I don't know why Stiles raises it again. My point was that Stiles tries to vitiate their criticism of emerging corporate capitalism by dismissing it as the cynical antipathy of an elite—"cynicism, stark and sometimes overblown." I call that a "cheap shot" because it allows Stiles to avoid any serious confrontation with what they had to say. And I call it "intellectual snobbery" because he fails to note the overlap in the criticisms offered by these elitists with the protests of the unwashed of the labor and farmer movements of the day, people whose antipathies to the corporation can't be so blithely tossed off as the grumblings of an antiquated aristocracy. Someone who thinks it worth telling the reader how many millions of bricks and millions of pounds of iron and thousands of barrels of cement went into the building of Grand Central Terminal but doesn't think it worth a similar inventory of severed limbs and fatherless families may or may not be chockablock with "sympathy" but definitely needs to take off his sunglasses.

Steve Fraser

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AUTHOR'S PRIVATE COLLECTION/PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIO PRIETO GARAY

José Manuel Prieto playing the piano, Havana, circa 1972

Travels by Taxi

by JOSÉ MANUEL PRIETO

On a day more than ten years ago I arrived in New York City—my second or third trip to America—and studied a line of taxis in the freezing cold: this new landscape, the United States, a country that my country had been at war with my whole life. Or that my country had endlessly claimed to be at war with, at least. My taxi driver was an Indian or Pakistani with the look of one who had few friends. I spent a long minute arguing with him, trying, at some length, to give him the address of my destination. Finally he turned his whole body toward me and sharply corrected me, but then, looking me over a second longer and ascertaining that there was no great malice in me but only a newcomer's ineptitude, he pondered my accent and asked, to sweeten my mood, "What country you come from?"

When I told him, he exclaimed "Cuba?" and then "Fidel Castro!"

He said it in the most annoying way, snapping his fingers, smacking his lips in sheer gusto, squaring his shoulders as he scrutinized me once more in the rearview mirror. He had the stance, the vehemence, the sudden energy of someone talking about a much-admired local strongman. His English was no better than mine, but he wanted badly to express what he felt, so he struck the palm of his right hand loudly against his left fist: "He gave to the Americans up the ass."

I'm sure I must have leaned toward the divider to read his name through the plexiglass; this was at the very beginning of my visits to New York, and it was the first time I'd encountered that reaction. But if I did read the name I don't remember it.

It was fall. I remember that and the city's distant silhouette, the gray mass of skyscrapers. I also remember how greatly his reaction surprised me: to think that there was so much sympathy—in America!—for the Cuban Revolution.

In July 1999 a taxi driver took me from Barajas to Sol, in Madrid. As we traveled across the city, we listened to news of a terrible plane crash reported in blood-curdling detail. The taxi driver turned the dial and found a melody much in vogue that summer, then began watching me covertly in the mirror. When I noticed, I gave him an automatic polite nod and immediately he inquired, "From your country?"

"No, she's from Mexico," I answered, meaning the singer. "I'm from Cuba."

As if by magic, he said, "Ah, Cuba! Fidel Castro!"—with pure delight and no thought of giving offense.

I debated whether to smile or take umbrage, eternally amazed by the tremendous popularity of the Cuban Revolution among the taxi drivers of the world.

Once, in Rome, I kept my mouth shut, as in fact I've mostly kept it shut, lost in a monologue I know I'll never impose on any poor cabbie's good nature. A monologue about this enormous mistake: the astonishing popularity of Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution. About everything I'd like to add, to nuance, amazed as I am to see it all reduced to a single name. And about the distress it always gives me—or rather, the perplexity.

For, after all, shouldn't it make me happy? My country, so easily identified among all others? Its status and relevance obvious to all, its popularity immense across the globe? It's just that there's a somewhat more complex vision that I would very much like to express, to expand upon, if only my knowledge of Italian or Turkish permitted.

The Cuban Revolution explained to taxi drivers.

Any detailed explanation of it is a lost cause: that I know. The many times I've failed, promising myself never again, and then eternally, ineptly falling back into long tirades that do nothing but complicate all of it even more in the minds of my interlocutors, while leaving them nevertheless imperturbable in their faith, convinced of their truth. Which is why, on further reflection, I've understood the advantage of a brief explanation, with all the strength and argumentative simplicity of cliché. Three or four points, duly set forth and clarified, an idea that takes shape quickly and easily, as during a dinner table conversation or the forty-five minutes of a trip from an airport to the city center.

But then there's the need, in speaking of the negative impact the Cuban Revolution has had on so many things, to speak also of all its achievements, how good it has been for so many other things. It's so inadequate to paint it as the blackest, the most terrible, the most murderous—for it isn't any of those things, not at all, though for far too many

José Manuel Prieto is the author of the novels Enciclopedia de una vida en Rusia, Nocturnal Butterflies of the Russian Empire *and* Rex, *recently published by Grove in a translation from the Spanish by Esther Allen. This essay is an adaptation of the book-length manuscript* La Revolución Cubana explicada a los taxistas *and was translated by Esther Allen.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

years it has always ended up doing harm. It's impossible to strip the Cuban Revolution of the reasons for its great popularity, its hard-won fame.

There are touches of genius present throughout the work of the Cuban Revolution and in its very conception. The brilliant idea—to begin with—of defying the United States. That detail alone. For those first several years, the energy that unfailingly impressed all those who watched Cuba pursuing the ambitions of a great country, in full consciousness of its achieved maturity, trying in only a few years to make up for the backwardness of centuries. That impulse.

And it's not been mere thievery. That is one of the first things that must be said about the Cuban Revolution. Neither Fidel Castro nor the Cuban Revolution is a vulgar plunderer whose only goal is self-enrichment. On the contrary, I see an entirely different trait: a deep and terrible idealism.

Who hasn't seen this? Which of its opponents hasn't wished for the Cuban Revolution to be worse than it truly is, for the greater weight and forcefulness of his argument against it, to avoid confusion and keep from having, in the midst of his diatribe, to acknowledge its better intentions?

And then this, the most frustrating and discouraging part: the untranslatability of the experience, the extreme difficulty of talking about it. The most attentive and understanding of your listeners, the one with the best heart, always fails to understand your reasons. The most minute descriptions, the most fatiguing enumerations can't answer all the questions or construct an intelligible overview—it's always inconclusive. All that's most painful and disturbing is somehow left out, a nightmare of minuscule perceptions. The despair I fall prey to in so many taxis: I'll never explain it; he'll never understand.

Mine is not an academic analysis replete with dates and statistics but rather one based on my firsthand knowledge of the Cuban Revolution, which I've never stopped inhabiting for all these years, whose fiery light has not ceased to illuminate me, vividly, for all these years. It's an argument pulled together on the fly, whatever's easiest and simplest, set forth to the taxi drivers of the world and the public they incarnate.

For that very reason, it's a weak argument, easy to criticize. But aren't our daily reactions largely, almost exclusively, based on perceptions, intuitions, preconceived certainties? This is an inventory of all those that operate in my head when I think of the Cuban Revolution. And I offer it knowing full well what a thankless task this is, foreseeing the series of misunderstandings, false accusations, insults it could inspire across the whole battlefront of a dispute that has gone on for decades, one that has had time to ripen and even pass its expiration date, one for which there has been time for all the misinterpretations any human undertaking could possibly inspire to grow and flourish.

Embarking on the task, nevertheless, like a citizen with his coffee and Sunday paper who reads about the advent of war with all its attendant horror and understands in a sudden flash, it was only thus, only in this way. And hurries to don the ridiculous combat uniform, goes out to fight alongside younger men, the absurdity of his situation seen clearly in a moment of respite from battle, the round lenses of his glasses raised to the sky. Marveling, telling himself: here I am, me, sworn enemy of all political discussion, *in the trenches*! Nothing good will come of this!

Yes, this is it, right here. How much do I owe you? Keep the change.

Consider this. If it's true that Cuba is a protectorate, a semi-colony of America and its most important and precious acquisition, a country on which America was imposed to the detriment or complete loss of its identity, then why not agree on the following inference as well: Fidel Castro, Public Enemy No. 1 of America, its principal accuser and public scourge, is (paradoxical as it may seem) an American politician.

El doctor Fidel Castro: American politician.

His entire significance is due to this one fact. The confrontation with an enemy that is part of himself, the knowledge of all its weaknesses, the precise calculation of its conduct, the deep understanding of its internal dynamics. That was what allowed him to imagine total flight from America as the only way forward, using the same Newtonian analysis as John Quincy Adams, according to whom Cuba would gravitate like a ripe fruit (an apple?) toward the United States.

The impossibility of Adams's prediction is now clear, Ahmed (my taxi driver), in the very simile: apples don't grow in Cuba.

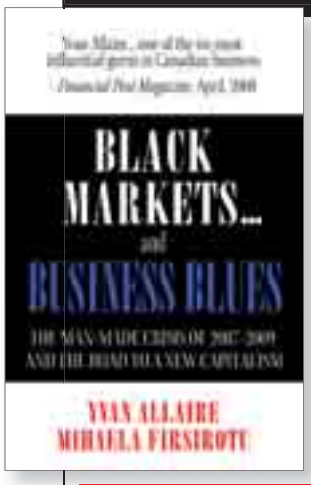
Why not like a ripe *orange*?

Fidel Castro's reasoning was the same; he calculated—like an engineer placing a satellite in orbit around the earth—that the only possible way of breaking the gravitational pull of the United States was by taking advantage of that very force to increase the momentum.

Of the *orange*.

"Thoughtful, passionate ...majestic."

Robert Greenhill, Chief Business Officer
World Economic Forum



"... their astute analysis, with many unexpected insights and their take-no-prisoners tone, holds the reader's interest."

Harvey Schachter
The Globe and Mail

ISBN-13 : 978-2-922285-45-1

"Black Markets and Business Blues"
Available at Amazon.com

FI Press 2009
www.fipressmontreal.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Presenting it all, very astutely, as a rejection: appealing to international opinion, staging the rupture before a very large live audience and with widespread media coverage.

That way he ensured, while still in pre-production, that he'd have good press in the *New York Times*, the coverage that may have guaranteed his triumph, like a play that opens to sparse houses until the enthusiastic review of an influential critic appears and its luck changes dramatically. In that, too, Fidel Castro is an American politician: in the awareness that everything is accomplished in the newspapers, the media, a truth he never underestimates.

The facts of the uprising reach every home in the same easy, didactic way as a television commercial or series, with the Cuban people in the starring role. And what a cast! The handsome and appealing Che Guevara, Fidel Castro himself and, in the role of villain, John F. Kennedy, also good-looking and *simpático*.

It was a duel such as Cuba had never before seen in its 450 years of existence. The confrontation *in crescendo*, the inconceivable spectacle of the bourgeoisie in flight, the frenzied nationalization, beginning with hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of American property. The anger and infinite surprise of the United States at such ugly ingratitude from its own offspring, from *an American politician*, who must have known, who was surely aware, that much of what was good in Cuba—all the island had gained in terms of modernity, technological advancement and well-being—came from the influence and example of the United States.

Many who opposed the revolution and want to convince us that Cuba was in good shape will trot out the fact that by the 1950s the peso traded at the same rate as the dollar. We enjoyed, that is, a splendid monetary union. So much do we owe to the United States!

Why then, I repeat, such ugly ingratitude for such beneficence?

The unusual spectacle of the greatest and most powerful country on earth, the United States, caught up in open war with so diminutive an adversary, like a wild animal in captivity, the astounded villagers crowding around to poke at it through the bars of its cage: that alone has captured the imagination of our contemporaries.

It has enabled Fidel Castro to present his triumph as the greatest, the most unlikely, the most consummate. It's been an enormous contribution to his cause, a wellspring of strength he's never stopped drawing on for all these years, a subsidy no less rich and generous than the Russians' very real millions. And the Russians contributed voluntarily, in full awareness; the United States involuntarily, pathetically, ineptly.

Fidel Castro has never made any mistake about the nature of his revolution, his Great Work. How insignificant it would be without the enthusiastic participation of the United States playing the Dangerous Predator in Captivity, for without that, without America's starring role, the spectators would long since have ceased flocking to the show.

In essence, no progress has occurred since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution, no alternative strategy, no change of scenery. When, out of simple common sense or some momentary relief from internal pressure, the United States has attempted to make a shift, to soften its stance or even—horrors!—to abandon the game entirely, it has been coldly and calculatingly provoked.

One of Fidel Castro's first executive visits, in April 1959, four months after the triumph of the revolution, was to the United States. But Castro was crafty, as memoirists have depicted him, keeping under wraps his refusal to accept any favor from the United States,

Give Books.
Wrap Up a Great Idea.

Crossing the Finish Line
Completing College at America's Public Universities
William G. Bowen, Matthew M. Chingos & Michael S. McPherson

"Identifying the causes of the college dropout crisis matters enormously, and [*Crossing the Finish Line*] tries to do precisely that. . . . For all the book's alarming statistics, its message is ultimately uplifting—or at least invigorating."
—David Leonhardt, *New York Times*

Cloth $27.95 978-0-691-13748-3

No Enchanted Palace
The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations
Mark Mazower

"This is a sprawling tale told with great energy, verve, and insight. Mazower offers an original and disturbing picture of the ideological foundations of the great sacred cow of postwar international institutions."
—Sunil Khilnani, author of *The Idea of India*

Cloth $24.95 978-0-691-13521-2

Racial Justice in the Age of Obama
Roy L. Brooks

"Roy Brooks provides savvy and succinct analyses of contending civil rights theories in the Obama era. Comparing understandings of and solutions for U.S. structures of racism, Brooks fairly but provocatively dissects traditionalism, reformism, separatism, and critical race theory, to offer the best evaluative summary yet of contemporary civil rights thinking."
—Joe R. Feagin, author of *Systemic Racism*

Cloth $27.95 978-0-691-14198-5

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

Read excerpts at press.princeton.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no credit or economic aid, however minimal, nothing that might endanger (by making him look like an ungrateful debtor) the formidable attack he was preparing, the betrayal he was nursing in his bosom.

Which was the only possible way forward from the perspective of our clever Fidel: only a rupture, a complete and vigorous change of course, could be assured of success. Any sort of agreement, any extension of the hand, would have fatally compromised his project, and therefore he scrupulously refrained.

I have to say—without passing judgment, without characterizing the procedure as betrayal or deep cunning—that the United States fell victim to an astute provocation. And it fell loudly and heavily, with all the added weight and inertia of its absolute conviction that Cuba, in its insolence, had to be punished. But it fell with the added force of its sincere desire to be a benefactor.

Hadn't the United States done a great favor to Cuba, rescuing it from Spain's imperial clutches? Didn't the island owe its independence to the United States? (Or, all right then, its charade of independence, but at the end of the day Cuba *was* independent, wasn't it?) How could anyone conceive of such thanklessness, such black ingratitude? Haven't I given you everything? Aren't you who you are because of me?

How could you do this to me?

And the tone for all these years has always been that of bitter domestic complaint, the voice of a betrayed spouse, the kicking and screaming of an abandoned lover. And then, insult to injury, there's the money that was amassed during the years of marriage, the goods acquired, my money.

Assassination plans, accusation after accusation. The ugly and denigrating spectacle of a divorce. And the children, the bourgeoisie, the middle class, abandoned in the revolutionary storm. I leave them to you, you take them! And the United States took them, like a mother (or seeing itself as a mother, terrible and vengeful), to live beneath its roof.

There's no page written about those early days of the revolution on which the word *paredón*—"the wall," meaning the firing squad—doesn't flash with fearsome glint. Chanted by groups of neighbors, chanted in workplaces, chanted—terrible thing—by schoolchildren. A word, a "saying of the people," that had the same chilling effect as the threat of the guillotine in the days of the Terror.

I don't think the exact number of people shot will ever be known. Let's admit, however, that it wasn't particularly high, that it never (this is easily conceded) reached the level of this or that other (most unfortunate) country.

Nevertheless, many were shot. And it was done, how shall I put it? Joyously.

All the killing carried out in those early years of revolutionary justice, without regret or the slightest change of expression. Indeed, that is precisely Dr. Guevara's expression in the famous photo: the expression of a man who advances undaunted; nothing can hold him back, and it doesn't matter whom he tramples along the way. If you happen to believe in the inevitability of revolutionary violence and its cauterizing and salubrious effects, then it's a nice picture. But if you've ever thought of or seen it as I see it here—as an error into which a country must never fall, all those deaths—then the harshness of that gaze is terrifying.

But let's not linger over the actual number of victims, giving a physical reality priority over the symbolic reality whose impact continues today. An impact of such magnitude that it still now, years later, decades later, reverberates across the country at all levels. The ever-presence of fear in Cuba is easily ascertained, and many kinds of behavior that are otherwise inexplicable can be ascribed to it.

The way the inhabitants of Cuba lower their voices when they speak in public or make any mention of the government. The fear that rips the whole country apart, the mistrust and betrayal that make any attempt at forming a group, any spark of opposition virtually impossible. Not armed opposition, even just peaceful opposition!

A fear some declare to be in remission: "our heroic nation" will overcome, etc. They are mistaken. Its profound and lasting effect will stay with us through vast zones of our future life. Several generations are irremediably marked, harmed, by fear. There's much sadness in what I'm saying now, a sadness no political campaign in all its optimism will ever want to accept. But I'm not engaged in politics, and I can say it: this damage is probably irreversible.

Ten thousand signatures are collected in a country with a population of 11 million, and this is deemed a victory—which it most assuredly is: a great victory! But isn't it also, and shouldn't that be said as well, clear evidence of a population harried by fear? A widespread, deep-rooted fear. And the whole country is permeated with it, this fear that fatally manifests itself in lack of initiative, dark uncertainty, all that so palpably differentiates our generation from the previous one, from people born in freedom and without fear.

Some will argue with me on this, some will say, No, there is no fear. And I can present no counterargument, no "data." I will only add, in bewilderment: but if I myself, if I myself, still now, as I write this, am full of fear?

Founding a Colony

Pill boxes, patrols, protocols: this is what made
the locals come running, so nothing should be disturbed.
Softly, softly, we thought. That graveyard needs moving
further south: chop it up
among urban allotments, carve out
wide boulevards and tunnels, erect
viaducts, excavate canals,
launch speedboats, ferries, hovercrafts and junk
the heritable past; let the map heave
with bulldozer silhouettes, he said
(lighting a corner of the map)
for this shall be our theater of war. And then what?
Unlock the fog. At twilight
only a boy's quick laugh in a blind back alley
shall echo that time shift of desire
all lost in space beyond their dreams.

ANDRZEJ SOSNOWSKI
(*Translated from the Polish by Rod Mengham*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's the most polished fiction of them all, the most captivating saga. On the same scale as other myths of the American continent: the Conquest, the wealth of El Dorado.

It's something like a heroic epic, with very bad bad guys and very good good guys, its narrative technique quite primitive but magisterially in tune with its time, a poem of rebellion against the grown-ups in which a few young men (not particularly important that this side happens to be Caribbean) rebel against their elders (very important indeed that this side is the United States). Deeply resonating through the capitals of Europe, with all the symbolic charge of leaving home and going out into the open air of the hippie encampment, well in advance of the upheavals of 1968 and perhaps one of the secret reasons for them.

And for those who are confused by the unswerving loyalty of so many Latin American intellectuals, so many writers of genius, to Fidel Castro, let me explain. They see him for what he is: the greatest fabulist of his time, an outstanding performance artist whose famous speeches are the most considerable part of the performance. The writers know he is as great as they are for this one achievement: his discovery of how to cease being a provincial in the arena of world politics, his strategy of effectively embedding himself in world literature (or in the world's fictions).

Maybe I'm wrong. I can hear more than one voice pounding in my ears (in a friend's living room in Paris, in a Stockholm kitchen), shutting me up—in keeping with our lovely island tradition—by shouting me down.

They can shout all they want.

I'll wait them out, then immediately continue to expand on what I've just been saying: it's easy to see Fidel Castro (the hateful and terrible Fidel Castro) as a great artist who was able to stage a massive production (with the participation of the United States in the role of big bully) of the myth of a confrontation between a tiny country and the Empire, the insubordination that has awoken so much sympathy.

And perhaps therein lies the cause of his popularity within the United States itself, which I vaguely intuit to be in the fine, supremely American, very citizenly tradition of facing down the government: pre-1959 Cuba viewed as a place in America where the US government had gone too far.

His admirers forgive him—and with them, the whole world forgives him—for having taken an entire country prisoner, for the terrible impoverishment of its life, all in the service of a confrontation they saw as far too costly for their own countries, a confrontation that a public not silenced by the pretext of an eternal state of emergency, not automatically accused of giving in to the Enemy, wouldn't hesitate to condemn.

The Cuban Revolution awoke a tremendous enthusiasm in Latin America, fed by the hatred and visceral anti-Americanism that the United States' stunning and incomprehensible success arouses in the somewhat magical mind of Latin Americans, who understand only plunder and looting and can explain the American miracle of prosperity to themselves only in those terms.

And isn't there also, across Europe, a certain discomfort with America—and might that be why they were delighted to see America "having trouble" with a very clever young fellow whose manners were appalling, true, but who was superb in his role of denouncer, thorn in the side? (But a terrible, tendentious and obviously limited politician, a fast talker, a demagogue, an arrogant street hawker.)

The Cuban Revolution does not want any adult ever to emerge on its territory, does not want there to be a moment when the enchantment of childhood is broken, the authority of an incompetent government doubted, in the understanding that we are adults and couldn't do any worse at leading the country, trying to lift it out of impoverishment and misery, to project it into the future. Or, and this amounts to the same thing: a moment when we embrace the heresy of having our own ideas. Corrupted by the years, infuriatingly thinking for ourselves. Such a cute little fellow in the photo, with all the shining enthusiasm of the beginning of life! How old and ugly today: those big ears, simply unpresentable!

If Fidel Castro has betrayed the Cuban Revolution, it happened at the moment when the children—children of the revolution—reached adulthood. When by dint of the passage of time there appeared, at the end of the 1980s, a reformist current, a generation of young people born and bred within the force field of the revolution, inclined to continue with its "independentist" agenda (or should we say its anti-US agenda) but from within a reformed socialism, eliminating the totalitarian variable while retaining the "Achievements" and the "Conquests."

Given the uncomfortable alternative of real change, by people who could in no way be accused of being pro-US (as he had always rushed to accuse the Cuban bourgeoisie or "Miami" of being), Fidel Castro chose to betray us. Utterly.

He fell back on the old strategy of ejecting us from the game. A wave of exile was organ-

Founding Another Colony

And the news will have to be tailored to their needs
with baffling opinion polls, announcements
of the number of steps at the ballerina's
dress rehearsal, rarefied shots of
Antarctic snow, cascades in the Andes
the backwash of shivering butterfly wings
no breaks in transmission no voice-overs
while regular slots play truant; no controllers
in sight and no authorization. You'd think not dying was
à la mode. With an almost creepy unconcern
they'll form columns and perform exploits
beyond every map and outside every schedule.

ANDRZEJ SOSNOWSKI
(*Translated from the Polish by Rod Mengham*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ized that again bled the country, depriving it of a very important group of writers, musicians and professionals who chose to leave or were told explicitly that their best option was to leave, that they were not trusted. And we were, I repeat, free of the taint of antipatriotic feelings (or, what amounts to the same thing in the perverse logic of the Cuban Revolution, pro-US feelings). In our writings, following the spirit of the times, we had argued only for a reform of socialism.

There are two possible readings of this.

The first invalidates what I've been saying about Fidel Castro's independentist agenda, the principally anti-US nature of his aims, which allows us to speak of his "resounding political triumph." This new evidence leaves us or forces us to opt for power alone as the motive and final explanation of his existence. This perspective explains, it must be said, many aspects of a procedure that is otherwise inexplicable. For when a whole generation, the generation to which I belong, appeared to tell him, "Yes, completely understood, we're no less anti-US than you, no less committed to the left and its vision of social justice, but also to a government, a socialism (not capitalism!) that would be more participatory," he chuckled into his beard and arranged for us to be taught a very public lesson, with folkloric *paredón* included.

Was this because he knew and understood—this would be the second reading—that true socialism can't be reformed, that any attempt at improvement would end, quickly and inevitably, in a dismantlement?

I think so. I'm sure of it.

Who knew that better than he, the man who had subjugated the entire country, brought it to its knees with his "revolutionary violence"? Because where others—and I myself at the time—naïvely saw a voluntary acceptance, an "election," he saw with absolute clarity that all of it had been adamantly opposed, that it would never survive the test of a real election or stand up to any airing out, any public discussion of his practices and methods. That's what happened with Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms, to which, with perfect clairvoyance, *el doctor* Fidel Castro was fiercely opposed from the beginning.

For Castro and Gorbachev were historical epochs apart from each other. Gorbachev had inherited his power, didn't know how it had been gained, saw himself as a "good leader," someone who hadn't needed to have people killed, who'd never gotten his hands dirty or built socialism by force and against the popular will. Standing atop a pyramid of infinite power, Gorbachev behaved like an heir who knows nothing of his grandparents' effort and sacrifice to amass the fortune that he, wanting to be a good person and not an "exploiter," is eager to squander, distribute among the poor.

Fidel Castro's situation was very different: he was the one who'd brought socialism to Cuba. The superhuman effort it had taken to put the entire country onto that footing was fresh in his memory (though, let's concede once more, he did it for reasons of the Confrontation and not in pursuit of the mere chimera of a better life for all). He harbored no doubt that given a choice, the public, the entire nation, would choose to get rid of him, and fast.

Fidel Castro made no mistake about that, and in some way it excuses him from the charge that power is, pathologically, his only objective, his guiding passion.

He is convinced (and perhaps he's absolutely right) that he alone is the best commander of this power, this type of power.

Which doesn't mean that either he or his power is desirable.

The Cuban people, the generation of the 1950s, were privileged pupils graduating *cum laude* with a major in American civilization. They had assimilated its teachings and been transformed into what they continue to be today, to the despair of their many allies, the many souls who seek to help them in their "unequal battle with the neighbor to the north": the most Americanized nation in Latin America.

American habits, American ways of thinking, Americanness itself are integral to Cuba, the prism through which it sees the world.

An entire nation that, having completed its education at the School of American Civilization, began producing American businessmen, American artists and American politicians, like our *simpático* Fidel Castro. But then, in that same generation, one group saw the need and believed it possible to consolidate our independence, accede to a more full-fledged adulthood and achieve, in passing, well-being and development for all, while another group, the middle class, the upper class, the so-called national bourgeoisie, imagined for one moment that this was doable, backed the revolt and then began to oppose it vehemently.

And when they saw themselves forced to emigrate for the reasons already stated, they arrived in America not as a group of exiled foreigners, immigrants who had to begin everything anew (though they did have to do that), but with the incalculable advantage of already being an American middle class and an American upper class, who by chance happened to speak a different language but who adapted with stunning speed and ease.

A speed and ease that had to do with the fact that fundamentally they had *not* left their country. Their genes had been homogenized by all the television ads, the newest model cars every year and all the other points of Cuban material existence, which was an American material existence, in Cuba's capacity as an outlying territory.

The Miami Economic Miracle, the astonishing ascent that transformed a sleepy tourist town, refuge for retirees, into the new capital of Latin America, was accomplished by the same generation that brought about the Cuban Revolution—the generation of the 1950s.

Has anyone understood that?

This is a truth that may surprise supporters of the Cuban Revolution who, without understanding much about the reasons for the dispute, have taken the side of the smaller country, the abused country, when what's really going on is a desperate lovers' quarrel.

Cuba wants to be the United States.

In contrast to many perspectives around the world that are critical or even disdainful of the obvious crudeness of much of the American way of life, Cubans see such a life as desirable, imagine their future as independent—but American. Ugly suburbs, ticky-tacky houses and disposable plastic cups all figure in the mental tableau of their happiness.

Any schema that seeks to oppose "Cuban identity" to "American identity" is false; as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, Cuban identity was shaped, nourished and colored by American identity, which was a consubstantial part of Cuban identity, one of its fundamental elements. This peculiar amalgam is manifest in any sector or period of Cuban life you might choose to name, from the very beginning of our "national awakening," through the rather odd fact that our first president was a Cuban-American schoolteacher, a Quaker who had lived through more than twenty winters in America, and the no less surprising detail that José Martí, our "national poet," the "apostle" of our independence, was a fiery lover of America and a privileged vehicle of the nationalist religion in its distinctive American variety.

In other words, there's always been a good deal of truth to the term "Manifest Destiny." Not in the sinister sense of occupation and subjugation but in that of proximity and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

espousal. Inevitable transference, imitation, admiration, irritation, hatred.

And love.

Nevertheless, it's incredible how unaware the United States appears to be of its importance in everything to do with Cuba. It acts as if it were a normal country, one more country in the community of nations, and not the very center, we might say—I say it decisively—of the existence of the island of Cuba.

Like a parasol, the Cuban Revolution is more necessary and casts a cooler shadow when the sun is highest in the sky. The size of that shadow is a generous gift of the fixity with which the star turns its interest upon us.

Searing us with its excessive interest! If only it would go behind a cloud, give us a respite, a chance to forget the parasol for a moment. In the cool of the evening, what would we need the parasol for? The Americans do not suspect how much they are loved, imitated, how we hang on their every word, from Fidel Castro himself (perhaps more than anyone else) down to the last little child on the island (who dreams of living in America). A country penetrated from top to bottom by America's influence, almost more than any other country on earth, we could say, and without any other point of reference or counterbalance.

Cuba has never stopped feeling this: it is a basic ingredient and not a foreign, intrusive and distorting element, as it has been depicted by the Cuban Revolution, as I have depicted it in other parts of this essay. Indeed, the United States is also mistaken in seeing Cuba as a foreign territory. It is one, undoubtedly, but to a lesser degree than perhaps any other country on earth. Hence the huge mistake of a vengeful and thunderous demeanor, when a tender and understanding tone would be much more appropriate, the tone of one who reproaches and admonishes *his own kin*.

Judging by other criteria such as the high cost of the "triumph," shifting our scrutiny to the catastrophe everywhere visible, judging by the calamitous state into which the country has been sunk, the chronic shortages, the near indigence; judging by the vast disintegration of the nation, the vast diaspora, we have to talk about the deep and shattering failure of *el doctor* Fidel Castro (and the Cuban Revolution).

Obvious to all is the slipping away of the initial project to diversify the economy, raise the standard of living, transform Cuba into all the things it has pretended to be without ever being: a "medical power" (ridiculous—what on earth is a "medical power"?) or an "agricultural power." It's worth asking what the initial plan was, what the revolution counted on achieving. Perhaps this would be easily traceable through Castro's many exhausting (and frank) speeches. Was he calculating that by, say, 1975 or 1980 he'd be able to lift the country out of underdevelopment, or at least out of the crisis into which the much-heralded confrontation with the United States inevitably submerged him?

If he was counting on that, it hasn't happened.

Instead, there's been year after year of unbearable scarcity, the eternal backdrop for a population struggling to live in utmost deprivation. For whatever reason it may be, whatever reason you or anyone else wants to put forth—beginning, naturally, with the US embargo—the Cuban Revolution is a resounding failure.

Honestly, I don't understand how it can be viewed any other way.

I imagine we may differ once again as to the causes. Blindness, inhuman ambition,

What Was Communism?

A new series from Seagull Books

These thought-provoking book essays explore the practice of twentieth-century Communism. Was the collapse inevitable? What actually happened in different parts of the world? And is there anything from that experience that can or should be rehabilitated? With capitalism mired in a deep crisis, these questions become relevant once again.

The Idea of Communism
TARIQ ALI
Cloth $15.00

Two Underdogs and a Cat
Three Reflections on Communism
SLAVENKA DRAKULIC
Cloth $17.00

The Cuban Drumbeat
PIERO GLEIJESES
Cloth $15.00

Back in the USSR
BORIS KAGARLITSKY
Cloth $15.00

Seagull Books
Distributed by the University of Chicago Press
www.press.uchicago.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

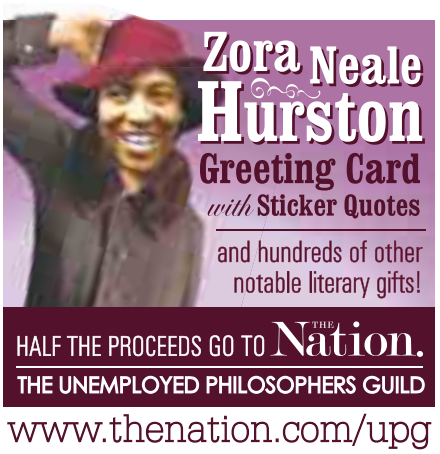
crippling Bolshevism and, yes, ineptitude on the part of the United States, from my point of view; from Castro's, undoubtedly, conspiracies, ambushes, bad luck and, yes, ineptitude on the part of the United States.

And since this is a war (let's acknowledge that fact), then consider the inhumanity of the general who would rather immolate his soldiers than allow them to surrender with dignity. The commander who sees his armies decimated day after day and his heart shudders, prepared as he is to sacrifice all of them, down to the last man. The whole country bankrupt, the thousands who throw themselves into the sea, all economic and material existence collapsing, the daily failure and defeat—is that not the work of a maniac, evidence of a heart of stone?

That would be the point of view of the commander's rational mind, if we concede, without question, that he has one.

Shouldn't he give an honorable discharge to the country that has served him for so long? Thank it for the effort, take pity on the women and children? Or even on the last men standing? Until the end of what? The embargo?

The Americans should lift it, let's concede that point: the infinite stupidity of the embargo. But they haven't done so. Worse, the Cuban Revolution is in no position to pressure them to do so. No less important, the embargo causes *them* little or no pain or damage. It makes no difference to the Americans: the Cuban people, their fate. But to Fidel Castro, to the Cuban Revolution, those things are supposed to matter. I've repeated this question until I'm blue in the face. Shouldn't he, however much it would pain him and even though it would be an acknowledgment of failure, let his people go, renounce the "struggle," not force them to go with him to the very end?



This part of the story is told from the perspective of the remote future, the distant assessment of someone making a dispassionate study of his ancestors.

What can we do with the Cuban Revolution? Where can we put the Cuban Revolution? Can we act as if it had never existed?

The questions take us back to the old polemic: had Cuba already achieved its independence (as I'm inclined to think it had)? Or was it still (as Castro's doctrine depicts it) a protectorate, poorly administered by corrupt politicians primarily interested in enjoying Cuban beauties and exploiting the beautiful island of Cuba?

What matters here, however, is that whichever of these answers is correct, the Cuban Revolution happened, like it or not. The island of Cuba is now a very different country from what it was.

Fully independent?

Yes. In fact, more independent than is prudent.

This is the foundation on which the country's future must be built. To ignore the revolution or denigrate it would be a mistake, the knee-jerk revolutionary quest for a tabula rasa. Far better to incorporate the revolution thoughtfully, without ascribing guilt. As a problem, an asset and a singularity.

And to approach it as capable administrators serene in their inheritance, their assets managed pragmatically, without the sentimental burden of all those black-and-white photographs. A brief time for analysis of very recent history but no grand gestures or epic poems, just a quiet moment spent contemplating the childish expressions of those adults in the photos. Understandingly. To create space, strip away all the obsolete grandiloquence. And if there's a good piece of furniture, still solid and stable, then into the living room with it, next to the piano, as a period detail.

That's the attitude.

No tribunals (established here in the back seat of this taxi). That's not my intention. Not the tribunal of history, the better to understand what happened. I've understood this today in particular, Oman (my cab driver from Cameroon): not to judge from the height of a tribunal with a flaming sword. To observe all of it, rather, *sub specie aeternitatis*.

That being said, there's nothing left but to acknowledge that the Cuban Revolution won.

Not a drop of irony in those words. *They* are the winners. They'll be the ones in charge of taking the country forward in the years to come, be Fidel Castro alive or dead.

Frankly, I don't see how it could be any other way.

Not the dissidents, who are currently more of a civic option than a real political one: not the representatives of the Cuban exile community, whose possibilities are even more limited, compromised as they are (politically? in the public mind?) by their long stay in America.

There's no one but them, the heirs to the violent and exceedingly self-absorbed Cuban Revolution. That is: the ones who are free of the idea of the glory and significance of the Cuban Revolution and definitely do not see it as something that "objectively" had to occur (never anything like that), and who are free as well of the idea that some other "revolution" might be necessary, some new abrupt or cataclysmic change to repair the harm wrought by that other abrupt and cataclysmic change. They are freeing themselves from the Cuban Revolution and loathing it mightily, but not—God save us!—revolutionarily.

Knowing how to make a break with its heritage of violence rather than acting as if nothing had happened. A clear and public expression of regret, an unequivocal condemnation of its excesses along with a vindication of its best aspects (the broad social and educational programs and all the rest), as a way of founding the country anew. Otherwise, all forward momentum might be lost in overt cynicism, the shiftiness of someone who acknowledges no guilt and believes and calculates that it's possible to live, to lie, as if nothing had happened.

No settling of accounts, no rush to judgment, no Second Cuban Revolution to rectify and cleanse away the evils, violence and social harm of the first one.

But yes, a rejection of its deeply antidemocratic character—more the structure of a military command than of a government—an acknowledgment of other actors in the political spectrum, a making of space for inclusion, a voluntary gathering in.

No longer proudly calculating that they'll be able to monopolize power at no risk to themselves and at enormous cost to the country. Their specificity (*Fidelismo*? his heirs?) identified as one point of view among others, constituting themselves as a political party, a true political party.

A party that ceases to be the State Leviathan that exists today, renouncing its monstrous privilege, which is a thousand times more aberrant than the endemic corruption of pre-1959 Cuba that the Cuban Revolution confronted and tried to correct.

Taxi. Taxi! ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Angels to Radios

by ANGE MLINKO

It is said that the tradition of English poetry began with Caedmon—an illiterate seventh-century lay brother who, ashamed of his inability to versify when the harp was passed around at a feast, fell asleep in his stable among the animals and dreamed of an angel. This angel, too, bade him sing, and again Caedmon protested that he did not know any songs; but then, inexplicably, he found himself obeying the angel's dictum: "Sing the beginning of the creatures!" Immediately on waking he wrote down the eulogy to the world and its maker that had been transmitted to him in his dream; today the nine-line Anglo-Saxon "Caedmon's Hymn" is the earliest known English poem—a product of what poets now often call "dictation." The gods (or God), the muses (or the Muse); afflatus, ecstasy, poetic madness: the lore of poetry worldwide attests to the claim that poetry at its best emerges from somewhere "other"—a source beyond the poet's ego and conscious mind. Sometimes the poem appears in dreams, as with Caedmon; sometimes during autohypnosis, as with William Butler Yeats. James Merrill's medium of choice was his Ouija board; Jack Spicer's, his orphic radio. A key interchange in the transition from angels to radios is the visionary poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke.

As an ambitious young poet, Rilke was chastised by his elder, Stefan George: "You've started to publish too early." Damning words! Rilke had authored seven volumes of poetry before *The Book of Hours*, his 1905 breakthrough, and repudiated them later in life, by which time he had grown tired of the publishing marketplace altogether and taken to circulating his poems mainly among friends (Constantine Cavafy, another poet whose mature work spanned the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was doing the same in Alexandria). Rilke turned from writing fashionable *Jugendstil* lyrics about maidens to producing inimitable meditations on the philosophical subjects of perceiving, knowing and being. For this he was rewarded with episodes of so-called dictation, culminating in February 1922, when he "received" a complement of *Duino Elegies*, which he had begun a decade before, and a new cycle, *Sonnets to Orpheus*.

The Poetry of Rilke
Bilingual Edition.
Translated and edited by Edward Snow.
North Point. 684 pp. $50.

By that point Rilke had traveled far from his origins. Born in Prague in 1875, he considered himself the product of a middling family, a middling education and a middling city. At a time when poets still honored, faithfully or fitfully, the Romantic ideal of depicting the sagas of the public world in epic terms, Rilke's distaste for his family and his city propelled him onto a different aesthetic path, one of lifelong cosmopolitan itinerancy. He escaped first to Berlin, then to Russia, then to Paris; there were sojourns in Spain, Egypt, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Switzerland; he was rerouted by World War I, and by the penury that drove him from villa to castle as the houseguest of patronesses all over Europe. (Some say he was a freeloader—his sense of entitlement is legendary.) In his introduction to Edward Snow's commanding and essential new volume of translations of Rilke's major poetic works, the culmination of decades of labor, Adam Zagajewski says that Rilke's "weak beginnings" placed him on the periphery of German culture in an era when Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin and Heine still awaited their successors. Rilke's benefactors were on the periphery as well. Most of them were aristocrats, but unlike Goethe (who was an adviser to a duke) or Yeats (who was in the Irish Senate), Rilke didn't meet them at court, and the ones he knew in private life were, as Zagajewski notes, "the shadows of once-powerful magnates."

But most important, it was out of his experience of homelessness that Rilke fashioned a persona who speaks with an elegiac voice not for himself but for the world of consciousness, which migrated here into animals (often cats), there into objects (roses, sculptures). This consciousness, which belongs to no one and everyone, earns Rilke's unending praise: it is the principle not only of biological life but ontological essence—whatever it is that causes something to arise from nothing, as in the lines carved on his tombstone:

> Rose, O pure contradiction, delight
> in being no one's sleep under so many
> eyelids.

Ange Mlinko, a recipient of the Randall Jarrell Award in Poetry Criticism from the Poetry Foundation, lives in Beirut. Her most recent book of poems is Starred Wire.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Though Rilke was marginal in his own time, his lyrical waywardness is prized in our post-Romantic one; praised by only a small group of connoisseurs when he was writing, his poetry is now beloved. *Sonnets to Orpheus*, *Duino Elegies*, his one novel, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, and perhaps most of all *Letters to a Young Poet* are touchstone works. Individual poems are famous: "Archaic Torso of Apollo," with its last line, "You must change your life"; "The Panther," pulsating with the energies of the caged cat. Rilke has even become something of a talisman in popular culture. He was the inspiration for the Wim Wenders film *Wings of Desire*, and recently the pop chart–topping disco queen Lady Gaga tattooed a quintessential Rilke passage on her upper arm: "In the deepest hour of the night, confess to yourself that you would die if you were forbidden to write. And look deep into your heart where it spreads its roots, the answer, and ask yourself, must I write?" Zagajewski claims that Rilke is probably more widely read in the United States than in Germany, which implies something about Americans' fascination with existential homelessness and self-invention and drift. I first cottoned to Rilke in Snow's translations of *New Poems* and *New Poems: The Other Part* as a teenager in the mid-1980s: Snow's version of "The Panther" staked itself in my young imagination, so I can't pretend to be objective.

A would-be poet with a thin education could do worse than enter into an affair with an intellectual fifteen years his elder. If that woman were Lou Andreas-Salomé, the love of Friedrich Nietzsche's life and a friend of Sigmund Freud and Richard Wagner, and she took him on extensive journeys to Russia (where he met Leo Tolstoy) and made him learn Russian so he could read Pushkin, then he might find himself so sharply aware of his changing consciousness that registering this shift would become his most intimate poetic theme.

> Now the hour bends down and
> touches me
> with its clear, metallic ring:
> my senses tremble. The feeling
> forms: *I can*—
> and I grasp the malleable day.
>
> Nothing was complete before I saw it,
> all becoming stood still.
> My eyes are ripe, and whatever they
> desire
> approaches like a bride.
>
> Nothing is too small: against a gold
> background
> I paint it large and lovingly
> and hold it high, and I will never
> know
> whose soul it may release…

This opening poem from *The Book of Hours* announces itself as the speech of a maker contemplating his materials. The book as a whole was conceived, Snow tells us in his notes, as the monologues of an "unnamed monk and icon painter in the Russian Orthodox Church." *The Book of Hours* was begun after Rilke's trip to Russia with Andreas-Salomé in 1899, and was continued at Worpswede, the German artists' colony, in 1901. It was at Worpswede that he met and married the sculptor Clara Westhoff, with whom he had his only child, Ruth. Clara's close friend Paula Modersohn-Becker also served as muse to Rilke; her death after the birth of her child would inspire his devastating "Requiem for a Friend." Surrounded by women, galvanized by them, he also fled them when they capitulated too easily to his charms. (Writes Zagajewski: "Nobody will admire Rilke as a father or husband.")

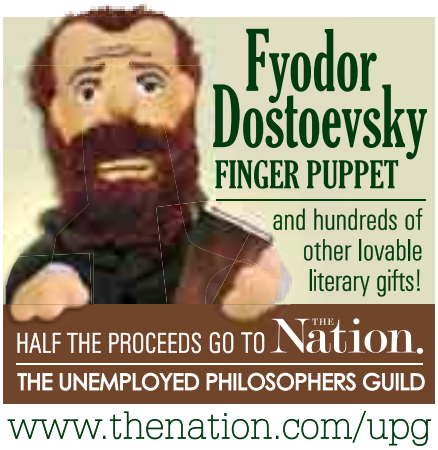
The Book of Hours, Snow argues, attempted things that had never been done before in German poetry: "It opened up whole new lyric possibilities for saying 'I' and 'You.'" A literal reading would map "I" onto the persona of the monk, "You" onto God. But "I" doesn't really know what he is ("am I a falcon, a storm/or a sovereign song?"), and "You" may also (sometimes) be Andreas-Salomé. If "the day" in the artist's hands is "malleable," so is identity itself. When "I" swaps places with the unresponsive Creator ("What will you do, God, when I die?"), the reader still feels the shock of the unexpected. Snow remarks that *The Book of Hours* is defined by its voice, "untethered from both the person writing it and the person speaking it," and locates the creation of this voice at the moment when Rilke decided to cut a series of narrative glosses (much like those of Dante's *Vita nuova*) that accompanied the original draft. Stripped of that prose scaffold, wherein the monk had a name ("Apostol"), the poems became what we think of as Rilkean: "untethered" from any particular person. And in the fictive character, Apostol the monk/maker, one can hear intimations of the poet's mature oracular voice.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—a sacred text for Rilke—persons become objects or animals. In Rilke's transformations, objects become animated, not with human consciousness but with a mutable transpersonal consciousness that is amazed at sheer existence; the amazement is frequently mingled with terror. In "The Rose Window," from *New Poems* (1907), a signature feature of cathedral architecture is imagined as a dilating eye, sucking one's gaze upward into divine belief, in a total loss of will. The same action, a dilating pupil, also draws in the observer of a panther in the zoo. That famous poem offers circle inside circle capturing contradictory qualia: enclosure and endlessness, perpetual motion and paralysis:

> His gaze has from the passing of the
> bars
> become so tired that it holds
> nothing anymore.
> It seems to him there are a thousand
> bars
> and behind a thousand bars no world.
>
> The supple pace of powerful soft
> strides,
> turning in the very smallest circle,
> is like a dance of strength around a
> center
> in which a mighty will stands
> numbed.

The panther, one Rilke actually observed in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, is incapable of attack, but the observer is consumed by its gaze—and vanishes into the heart of mystery.

Radiating outward and being closed in: to oscillate between these antipodes is a recurring state in *New Poems*, where Rilke envisions "heavens that closed nowhere" ("Tombs of the Hetaerae") and takes us, frame by frame, through the process of roses opening ("The Bowl of Roses"). Two longer poems, "Orpheus. Eurydice. Hermes" and "Birth of Venus," are the apotheosis of these contradictory movements: in the former, a woman cannot escape the enclosure of



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the underworld, and in the latter a woman bursts from a cloven sea into the open. The paradoxical trope continues in *New Poems: The Other Part* (1908), where existence is so naked that "there is no place/that does not see you" ("Archaic Torso of Apollo") and yet where, in "Buddha in Glory," "all this world out to the farthest stars/is the flesh around your seed."

Rilke had been fascinated by the formal conundrum of enclosure and freedom at least since his tenure as Auguste Rodin's assistant. In 1902 the poet was commissioned to write a monograph on the great sculptor. Exhilarated by his visit to Rodin's studio, where fragments of the massive *Gates of Hell* met him in the courtyard, he entered into the older man's employ and observed the rules of genius—the first of which was not to wait for inspiration. Rilke, whose fame thrives on the legend of his creative outbursts and angelic dictation, learned from Rodin that daily labor is necessary preparation for the moment of insight. He also learned that art is about the struggle with materials. Yet how does one make an analogy between sculpture and poetry? Sculpture has mass; language is mere air. As William Gass, a devotee of Rilke, remarks in his essay "Rilke's Rodin," "All of us have emotions urgently seeking release, and many of us have opinions we think would do the world some good, however the poet must also be a maker, as the Greeks maintained, and, like the sculptor, like every other artist, should aim at adding real beings to the world, beings fully realized."

But how can "beings fully realized" be fashioned from language? It was this question that provoked Rilke to delve more deeply into his subjects, to release the invisible being in them the way Michelangelo "freed" the angel in the stone by carving. Though they are known as his "thing-poems," what is original about them is that their still lifes are dynamic; it's as if Rilke translates the seemingly random movement of their atoms. In "Archaic Torso of Apollo" the torso "burns," the gaze "holds fast and shines," the breast is a "surge," the slightly twisting loins make a "smile." And if still lifes are dynamic, conversely, living beings are captured in states of arrest, or extracted from the general buzz of life and held up like rare objects, apotheoses of inwardness, by the connoisseur-poet. In straining against naturalism and creating crossings between the animate and inanimate, Rilke demonstrated that language can appear to free a hidden being in an object that has acquired its own freestanding splendor, separate from authorial ego and what Gass calls "a message in a bottle" or "feelings raised like a flag." These crossings are not descriptions but enactments of form coming to enclose as the chisel comes to liberate—two motions that are essentially one in the imagination.

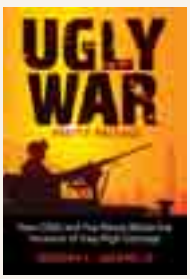
Having made these breakthroughs, both formal and imaginative, Rilke was primed to receive the dictation of his two major works, *Duino Elegies* and *Sonnets to Orpheus*. There are reasons to be skeptical of the supernatural elements of the story, but it goes like this: *Duino Elegies*, a series of meditations so named because they came to him at Castle Duino on the Adriatic Sea (where Dante allegedly wrote parts of *The Divine Comedy*), seemed to emerge from the sounds of a storm in the winter of 1911–12. Rilke's confidante, Princess Marie von Thurn und Taxis-Hohenlohe, had installed him in the castle so that he could work. (Her nickname for him was Dottore Serafico.) But his days passed in melancholic idleness until, as she wrote in her memoir,

Strengthening Congress
Lee H. Hamilton

The case for reinvigorating Congress, by an eminent former Congressman.

"A lively blueprint for restoring a risk-averse Congress to its rightful place in our democracy. This penetrating analysis by a pre-eminent Washington insider is a must read for anyone interested in politics and government." —Martin Tolchin, Congressional Correspondent, *The New York Times*

paperback $14.95



Ugly War, Pretty Package
How CNN and Fox News Made the Invasion of Iraq High Concept
Deborah L. Jaramillo

Investigates cable news' presentation of the 2003 Iraq War using high concept filmmaking as a framework and paying close attention to how Fox News and CNN packaged and promoted the U.S. invasion of Iraq while offering a new way of understanding how television news reporting shapes our perceptions of events.

paperback $22.95

UN Ideas That Changed the World
Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij, and Thomas G. Weiss
Foreword by Kofi A. Annan

"This vital book and the entire UN Intellectual History Project capture the path-breaking ideas that have brought about deep transformation to our world. . . . At this time when we face multiple threats to development, it is vital to reclaim and renew this legacy of the UN." —Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of ESCAP

paperback $24.95

Walking Together, Walking Far
How a U.S. and African Medical School Partnership Is Winning the Fight against HIV/AIDS
Fran Quigley
Foreword by Paul Farmer

Nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize and described as a miracle by the U.S. ambassador to Kenya, this is the story of a remarkable partnership between the Indiana University School of Medicine and the Moi University School of Medicine, who created a model program to save lives and empower the sick.

paperback $19.95

INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

To Order Call: 1-800-842-6796
Or Visit: iupress.indiana.edu

Blog: iupress.typepad.com
Socialize: twitter.com/iupress

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CHARLES H. KERR
PUBLISHING COMPANY

DREAMS & EVERYDAY LIFE: André Breton, Surrealism, Rebel Worker, sds, & the Seven Cities of Cibola by Penelope Rosemont."This book is wonderful! I read nothing else till I finished it; a great and passionate evocation of those times—unapologetic and *real.* —*Diane di Prima*

WANTED: MEN TO FILL THE JAILS OF SPOKANE. Edited by John Duda. The courage and creativity of these Wobbly free-speech fighters of 1909, laughing in the face of law and order to defy an unjust system and even less fair working conditions, could not be more relevant.

By Paul Garon & Gene Tomko. With CD. "A masterpiece of cultural history." —*Robin D. G. Kelley.*

ARMITAGE AVENUE TRANSCENDENTALISTS Edited by Janina Ciezadlo & Penelope Rosemont. "Civil rights activists, sit-ins, Wobblies, prisoners, Surrealists, the World's Fair both heroic and funny, and spiced with unforgettable characters." —*David Roediger*

THE BIG RED SONG BOOK ***Edited by Archie Green, Franklin*** Rosemont, David Roediger & Sal Salerno. A history of the IWW through its songs—the all-around best collection of rebel workers' songs ever compiled in English. —*Oliver Katz*

Charles H. Kerr Publishing Company
1726 West Jarvis Ave., Chicago, IL 60626
773-465-7774
www.charleshkerr.org
www.charleshkerr.net

all at once, in the midst of his brooding, he halted suddenly, for it seemed to him that in the raging of the storm a voice had called to him: "Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the Angels' orders?" He stood still, listening. "What is that?" he half whispered. "What is it, what is coming?"

He took out his notebook, which he always carried with him, and wrote down these words, together with a few lines that formed without his intervention. Who had come? And then he knew the answer: the god…

Rilke wrote two full elegies and parts of four more. But then the dictation stopped. Ten years later, in the Château de Muzot in Switzerland, he received another transmission of poetry: this time twenty-five sonnets materialized in the space of three days, beginning on February 2, 1922. These were *Sonnets to Orpheus*. A few days later more elegies came to him. ("The *Elegies* are here!" he excitedly wrote to his publisher.) He drafted the final elegy on February 14. Then he resumed a second cycle of *Sonnets to Orpheus*, which spanned February 15–23: twenty-nine poems came to him during this time. He was 46 years old.

In his notes to *Sonnets to Orpheus*, Snow gives some idea of what precipitated this creative storm. (Rilke himself repudiated the idea of footnotes to his dictated poems: "I believe that no poem in the *Sonnets to Orpheus* means anything that is not fully written out there, often, it is true, with its most secret name.") His lover Baladine Klossowska (the painter Balthus's mother) had given him a new copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which features the story of Orpheus. He had been reading Michelangelo's *Sonnets* (no doubt piquing the memory of his education at Rodin's hands) and Paul Valéry, who had stopped writing for twenty years—though whether that would console or terrify Rilke in his own creative drought is hard to say. Then on January 1, 1922, Rilke received a journal written by Gertrud Knoop, detailing the final days of her 19-year-old daughter Vera's battle with leukemia. Vera, a dancer, had been a playmate of Rilke's daughter. The delivery of this agonizing testimony into Rilke's hands was catalytic.

Orpheus, like Caedmon, is a myth of poetry's origins. In Ovid's telling, Orpheus is a gifted musician; he descends into Hades to beg for the return of his beloved wife, Eurydice, who has died prematurely. The god of the underworld, moved to tears by his song, grants Orpheus his wish under one small condition: that Orpheus not look back at Eurydice while they are exiting Hades. Orpheus looks back, and Eurydice vanishes from his sight forever. From then on he wanders, shunning society, and sings songs so beautiful that trees spring up in his wake; finally, he is set upon by vengeful maenads and ripped limb from limb.

This is a myth of poetry's origins much different from that of Caedmon: where the latter is the praise of Creation, with the poet as an illiterate messenger of the divine, the Orpheus myth elegizes the lost, with the gifted, flawed poet ultimately given up for ritual sacrifice. Orpheus is the more powerful myth for us, who have lost Caedmon's Christian optimism and confer the greatest fame on poets who take on the ancient role of the victim. Rilke wrote praise poems like Caedmon—what are his *Dinggedichte* if not praise poems?—but he was always drawn to the figure of Orpheus, and his frenzy in 1922 was triggered by the untimely loss of Vera, a Eurydice figure.

A tree arose. O pure transcendence!
O Orpheus sings! O tall tree within the ear!
And all was silent. Yet in that silence
pulsed new genesis, new signaling, new change.

Creatures of stillness thronged out of the clear
disentangled forest, from nest and lair;
and it wasn't cunning, wasn't heed or fright
that put such softness in their step,

but listening. Bellow, shriek, and roar
seemed small inside their hearts. And where once
there'd scarcely been a hut to take this in,

a hidden refuge made of darkest longing
with an entranceway whose braces shook,—
you built temples for them in their hearing.

This is the first sonnet as translated by Edward Snow. Like Caedmon lying down among the animals, Orpheus tamed wild creatures with his music. Caedmon's hymn identified God, the maker, as an architect who first built heaven's roof; in Rilke's poem Orpheus is also an architect. Where

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there had been only the barest of shelters, Orpheus creates—out of music, no less—the safest of havens for the creatures that listen. Likewise the itinerant Rilke finds the haven in his poetry in myth, not homeland.

In the second sonnet, the figure of Vera enters:

> And almost a girl it was and came
> forth
> from this glad unity of song and lyre
> and shone brightly through her
> springtime veils
> and made herself a bed within my ear.
>
> And slept in me. And all things were
> her sleep.
> The trees I'd always marveled at,
> these
> palpable distances, the deep-felt
> meadows,
> and an entire life's astonishments.

Rilke transforms lament into praise. Death becomes sleep; the world becomes dream. Perfection is sleeping; sleeping is arising. A round of paradoxes animates this mythical world, much as Wallace Stevens sustains the thirty-three stanzas of "The Man With the Blue Guitar" with variations on a central paradox:

> They said, "You have a blue guitar,
> You do not play things as they are."
>
> The man replied, "Things as they are
> Are changed upon the blue guitar."
>
> And they said then, "But play, you
> must,
> A tune beyond us, yet ourselves,
>
> A tune upon the blue guitar
> Of things exactly as they are."

Two poems, seemingly worlds apart, but both oracular. Rilke's lament sounds like effusive praise; Stevens's praise like singsong lament. Either way, they shed light on each other as made things: a poem about death is really a praise poem about making, and a poem about making is really a lament for diminished reality.

Rilke's fashioning of lament and praise into a contradictory unity was presaged by other contradictions in his work: the vast realms that enclose, the forms that open, still lifes that become animate or animals that become still lifes. Like the "tree in the ear" (which may or may not appeal to readers who think of it as "surreal"), they are part and parcel of that poetic logic.

ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY

Ph.D. in Leadership & Change

email
admission@phd.antioch.edu

toll-free
877-800-9466

website
www.phd.antioch.edu

"Be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for humanity."
Horace Mann,
Antioch's First President

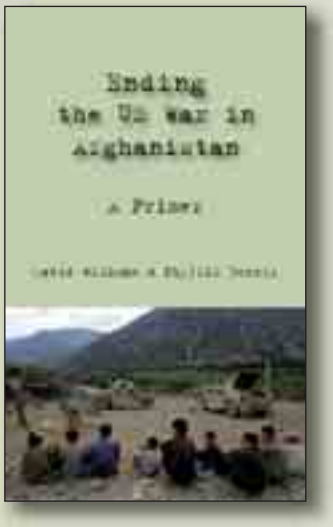
A low-residency program that combines faculty-mentored, individualized learning with a challenging interdisciplinary core curriculum.

This distinctive program is for professionals seeking a degree that offers:

- Quarterly residencies
- Academic mentoring
- Learner-centered focus
- Integration of theory and practice
- Distinguished faculty
- Flexibility of pace to completion

New from Interlink Books

"Wildman and Bennis have written an invaluable guide to thought, policy, and action on Afghanistan..."
—Richard Falk



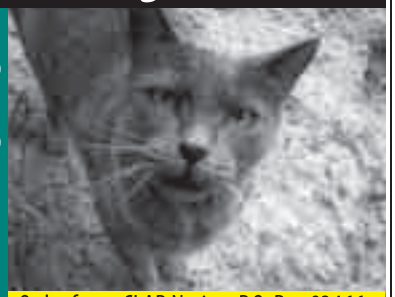
www.interlinkbooks.com
1-800-238-LINK · sales@interlinkbooks.com

"A call for action on behalf of America's school kids."
—Marion Nestle, author of *Food Politics*

FREE FOR ALL
Fixing School Food in America
JANET POPPENDIECK
California Studies in Food and Culture
At bookstores or www.ucpress.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cat Lovers Against the Bomb
Wall Calendar 2010

Order from: CLAB Nation, P.O. Box 83466
Lincoln, NE 68501-3466 $8.95 +$1.75
Toll free: 887-778-3434 postage

AFTER PATRICK HENRY:
A Second American Revolution
by Neal Q. Herrick
Black Rose Books.
Paperback, $18.99 Amazon.com
Herrick identifies the constitutional flaw that has led us to our present elective monarchy and lawless government. His award-winning (IPPY's Best "freedom fighter" Book of 2009) historical analysis points out a never-used constitutional remedy for these problems.
Blog at www.nherrick.blogspot.com.

European Beret $14
100% Wool • One Size Fits All
Black, Navy, Brown, Red, Camel, Grey
Check or Credit Card w/Exp. Date.
Add $2 shipping plus $1 each additional
www.johnhelmer.com
John Helmer • Est. 1921 • (503) 223-4976
969 S.W. Broadway, Dept. TN129 • Portland, OR 97205

Sholom Aleichem
Finger Puppet
and hundreds of other lovable literary gifts!
HALF THE PROCEEDS GO TO The Nation.
THE UNEMPLOYED PHILOSOPHERS GUILD
www.thenation.com/upg

In a review of William Gass's *Reading Rilke: Reflections on the Problems of Translation* (1999), Marjorie Perloff listed eight versions of the first line of *Duino Elegies*, including Edward Snow's, and concluded that none of them "give the reader who knows no German any real sense of Rilke's peculiar power." Perloff dangled the possibility of another Rilke, one whose language is knottier and more nuanced than we could possibly imagine. For corroboration, one might turn to Christopher Middleton, a poet and professor of Germanic languages; his essay on Rilke's "Birth of Venus" details the sound patterns that are the warp and weft of the poem.

Having little German myself (and duly red-faced admitting it, especially after Perloff's rebuke), I am certain that there is an unknown Rilke in back of the symbols and paradoxes by which we obtain that little thing lost in translation, the "poetry." I am confronted by this unknown Rilke not when I reread the *Dinggedichte* but when I turn to the fierce, rhetorical, vatic *Duino Elegies*: suddenly I am at sea or, worse, the doldrums. (I imagine a similar problem faces translators of, say, John Ashbery's longer meditative poems.) There is controversy as to whether the grandeur of the *Elegies* and the myth surrounding them obfuscate the fact that Rilke's short poems are really his best achievement; there is controversy as to which translation is best, for one preserves the density of the language while another unravels the connotative meanings better, and bashing Rilke translations seems to be a sport among connoisseurs.

But one must be careful not to let the controversy obscure something important: if English translations of *Duino Elegies* remain contested, it's because Rilke has become indispensable. We read Rilke for the figures: "And all things were her sleep," he says of the girl who makes a bed in his ear; that would also be the same sleep from his epitaph: "no one's sleep under so many/eyelids." We read Rilke for a vocabulary that transcends our little, individual languages to a universal (and premodern) figural vocabulary of the lyric. If it is an illusion, it is an optimistically American one—and still generative.

After *Duino Elegies* was completed, Rilke conspired with his myth to pretend that his gift was spent. Snow demonstrates that this was a feint and offers a hefty collection of the short, beautiful lyrics Rilke wrote, and declined to publish, until his death. Rilke was the poet of angelic dictation, but he labored like a craftsman to the end. He died, like Vera Knoop, of leukemia, but he didn't want to know the name of his disease. He thought that anything worth knowing was in the poems. ■

Full Harvest

And it seemed it was time for us to die
somehow, right now, this afternoon, but the apples
were abundant that year and ripened
before autumn really showed what it was made of.
Even the water shoots arced into branches.

And now the sun is happily drinking water
from the puddle at the gate and from the burdock
-sized leaves of the lilac, but it's not warm enough for that,
the day smacks of humidity. Again the magpie chatters
in its own way, and old friends, one after another,

will deny us, and we would be the last
to want to hinder them, but neither
to overlook this, because then how would the others cope,
left high and dry, without a word from us.

PIOTR SOMMER

(*Translated from the Polish by Christian Hawkey and W. Martin*)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Classified

While we reserve the right to edit, reject or reclassify any advertisement, The Nation *wishes its readers to know we don't have the facilities to check the promises made by our advertisers, and we have a strong presumption against censoring any advertisement, especially if we disagree with its politics. To advertise, contact amanda@thenation.com or call (212) 209-5414. Mail inquiries to* The Nation *Classified Department, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.*

ANCIENT SECRETS

SCHOLARLY BOOKLET PROVES PISO (*a k a* Josephus) invented fictional Jesus, Gospels. Amazing but incontrovertible. $15: Abelard, Box 5652 A, Kent, WA 98064.

ASTROLOGY

UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES AWAIT YOU! Answers for the heart, from the heart. Gifted, caring psychic readers. $3.23/minute. 1 (800) 824-7107; voiceofastrology.net.

BLOGS/WEB

ALQASAS.NET. Elderly writer's urgent request to Arab Islam.

RESIST THE PRESENT. Blog the future. revolutionsolution.com.

GOOGLE "protestants commit suicide."

READ UP-TO-THE-MINUTE NEWS. Politics, business, travel, political blogs, celebrity news, bios…more. jonesnyhistory.com; famouswelsh.com.

BOOKS

DON'T LET THE TITLE FOOL YOU. *Dr. Lumumba's Dream of Incest* is not a dirty book. (888) 280-7715. Also available at Amazon.com.

DEBUT BOOK OF POETRY, *Holding Five Aces*, by Benjamin Rogers. Available benjaminkrogers.com. $7.95. Good reviews.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

PIANO TUNING PAYS. Learn with American School of Piano Tuning. Home-study course. Tools included. Free brochure. 1 (800) 497-9793.

EMPLOYMENT

CLERGY LEADER sought by progressive Ethical Culture community in Park Slope, Brooklyn. Details at bsec.org/57701.html.

FOR EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION to change your work—and our world—visit changeworks.org or call (866) 276-7201.

LIBERAL LIAISONS

If responding to a Nation Box number, send replies to: Nation Box ___ , The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.

FETISHES AND FANTASIES fulfilled. Hot erotic talk with creative, sensuous woman. No limits. Personal, confidential. Call (866) 844-8286.

MATURE, INTELLIGENT CONVERSATION. Erotic, imaginative, independently operated. missaria.com. (866) 454-3763.

AURAL EROTICA. Well heeled, well spoken, not always well behaved. Fetish friendly, smart & sexy. 1 (800) 717-LIZZ (5499); ElizabethPaxton.com.

GREEN SINGLES. Free photo ads for progressive singles in the environmental, vegetarian and animal rights communities. Searchable listings for friendship, dating, marriage. Since 1985. greensingles.com.

LIBERAL LIAISONS

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM? Single male, 54, 5 feet 9 inches, athletic, sailing, silent sports, yoga, organic farm, cats, eclectic, political consultant, left, social/farm/food activist, sustainable lifestyle, passionate, romantic, intellectual. ISO fit woman (mid-40s to early 50s), mutually affirming relationship, Wisconsin. Reply Nation Box 861, or e-mail farm.wi@gmail.com.

SMALL MAN, WELL-READ. Thoughtful. Uncommonly fit. Seeks petite, 60s, 70s female, conscionable, perceptive, for last act. West Coast, Seattle, Vancouver. Reply Nation Box 892.

ATTRACTIVE, YOUTHFUL SENIOR WIDOW. Financially secure, warm and outgoing professional. With *joie de vivre*. Passionate music lover and lover of the arts. Seeks soulmate to share culture and romance in NYC, the Berkshires and elsewhere. mimi1R@aol.com.

WIDOWER, 60, progressive politics and values. Interested in arts, cycling, yoga. Seeking renewal with woman, 45-60, of similar values and interests. Philadelphia. LRZ.mensch@gmail.com.

MERCHANDISE

Talk Back Tees

Liberal quotations, wit & wisdom, hand-printed on colorful, 100% cotton tees

talkbacktees.com (800) 777-9242

EXPRESS YOURSELF! Stickers, shirts, buttons, emblems and more—evolvefish.com. 1 (800) 386-5846 for catalog or to order now.

SUPPORT *THE NATION* AND OUR NATION! Shop online at thenationmart.com and exercise subtle and not-so-subtle dissent. Most items are union-made. Great gifts!

CAT LOVERS AGAINST THE BOMB: 2010 wall calendar. $8.95 + $1.75 postage. Cats & Peace: what more could you want in a calendar? Order from: CLAB-NC, PO Box 83466, Lincoln, NE 68501, or toll-free (877) 778-3434, or catcal@aol.com.

MORTGAGE LENDERS

WASHINGTON, DC–AREA MORTGAGE FINANCE. Whether you are buying or refinancing, deal with like-minded professional. Fellow *Nation* reader. Phil Whitt, (301) 442-0901, or e-mail whitt.phil@gmail.com. Knowledge, integrity, skill.

ORGANIZATIONS

LANSING, MICH., *Nation* discussion group is looking for new members. We also would like to link up with any progressive discussion groups meeting in Michigan and assist anyone throughout the state seeking to establish a *Nation* discussion group. Contact: richardc@michcom.net or (517) 627-4591.

BOSTON HUMANIST COMMUNITY. Free Sunday lectures. Ethical culture. Harvard Square. Social activity groups. bostonethical.org, (617) 739-9050.

SAN FRANCISCO *Nation* discussion group. For information, e-mail evilhess@gmail.com.

NASHVILLE, TENN., *Nation* discussion group. Contact Howard Romaine. hromaine@gmail.com.

PSYCHOTHERAPY

CHICAGO PSYCHOTHERAPIST, twenty-five years, all issues including depression, anxiety, relationships, creative blocks. Sliding scale, insurance. Deborah Hellerstein, PhD, (312) 409-9516. therapyinchicago.com.

REAL ESTATE

MOVING TO FAIRFIELD COUNTY, CONNECTICUT? Realtor seeks clients of same persuasion as a *Nation* subscriber. Contact (203) 259-2519 or madgecanning.com.

LEFT COAST, US. Work with The Realtor Who's on Your Side. Norma J.F. Harrison. (510) 526-3968. (866) 264-9029. NormaHa@pacbell.net.

GREATER SACRAMENTO–AREA REALTOR seeks progressive clients. Margo McBride, Remax Professionals. (916) 721-8334. margomcbride@comcast.net. margomcbride.com.

YEAR-ROUND OUTDOOR LIVING! Quiet writers' retreat/party house in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. $325,000. E-mail: juliedemexico@gmail.com.

SPIRITUAL SERVICES

TAROT IN TIMES SUCH AS THESE: tarotforthesetimes.com. Michael, readings on phone. PayPal.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

GUARDIAN ANGEL, *Nation* reader reaches level of incompetence, seeks help to right a wrong: (1) pro bono services of Texas attorney experienced in health insurance claim matters; (2) pro bono services of physician specialist(s) in heavy metal toxicity; (3) Hollywood or other generous benefactor; and (4) investigative (preferably environmental) reporter. Chris Kuykendall, (512) 463-1143 (work, Texas Legislative Council) or (512) 459-8375 (home).

Events

NATIONAL

Economy Connection

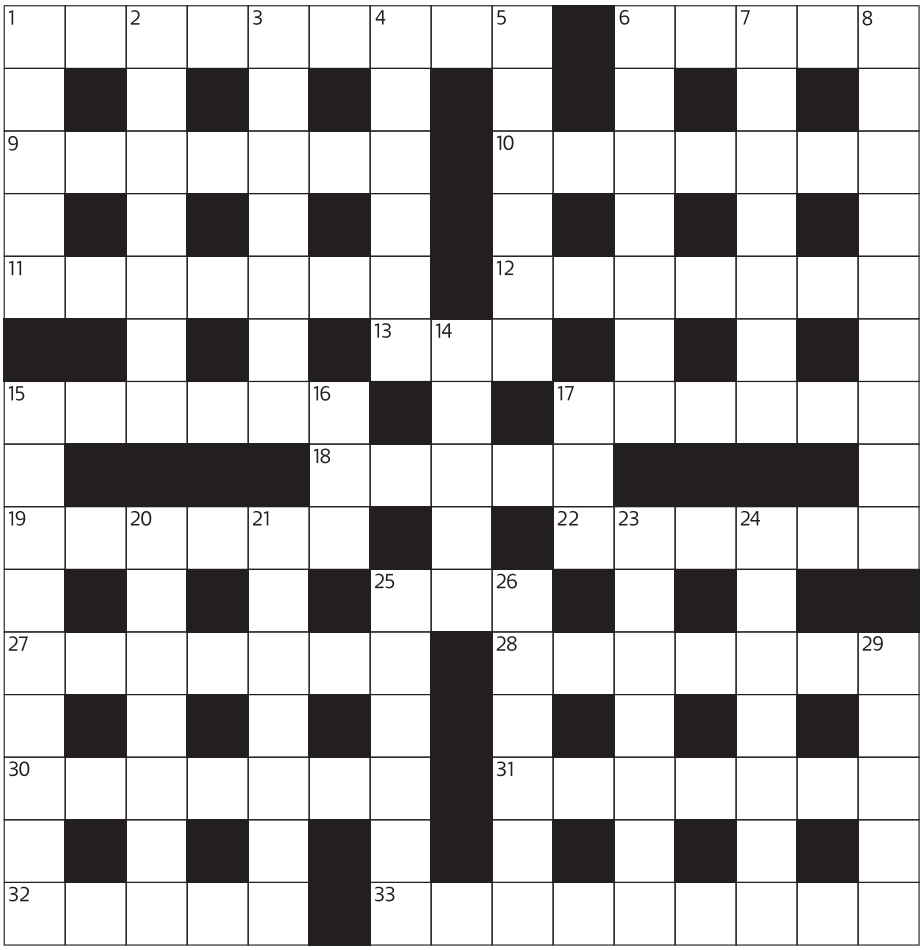
■ War and global capitalism. Unemployment and recession. For speakers and resources on these and related topics, contact Economy Connection, a project of the Union for Radical Political Economics. We can provide speakers for formal or informal events sponsored by community groups, unions, high schools, colleges or political organizations. Our speakers can talk about wealth and poverty, and the economic forces that generate increasing income inequality between and within countries. They can cut through the confusing terminology that is used to prevent ordinary, intelligent people (with and without college degrees) from understanding and participating in discussions on the policies that affect our lives. Tell us what you need, and we will look for a speaker who is right for you. Contact us at (201) 792-7459 or soapbox@urpe.org. Join URPE! urpe.org; (413) 577-0806; URPE@labornet.org.

The advertising deadline for Events is every Thursday. Rates: $210 for 50 words; $260 for 75 words, additional words (above 75) $2.00 each. To place an ad, call Amanda at (212) 209-5414.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Puzzle No. 3195

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Backing up, crash into French bike—America, in short, is fantastic! (9)

6 and **17** down Taken off the stock market, backward Ed lied about the little street. (8)

9 Hear spouse once dislocated hip. Do I indicate a cartilaginous process? (7)

10 What you call a place where a cat straddles a little horse? (7)

11 Evil mostly comes back after love, which works to wear things away. (7)

12 Concerning the tardier teller? (7)

13 See 25 across

15 Avoiding a hatchet is pretty smart! (6)

17 Kind of bullet train starts, and a competitor follows. (6)

18 Headache starts Midwestern playwright's pivotal device. (5)

19 Tangled line on backward ocean current. (2,4)

22 Classically, a finger or a foot. (6)

25 and **13** One hears views about how to enhance flavor. (6)

27 Gold fruit sliced short at the coin-op dispensary. (7)

28 Little Spanish projectile often found under the eaves. (7)

30 After a company's typical ending, it sounds like you kiss an evil spirit! (7)

31 Get stuck between two points, following former interpreter. (7)

32 Give a prod to Garbo, initially appearing in intimate portrait. (5)

33 Sloppily uses a tart, and gets thoroughly soaked! (9)

DOWN

1 An unknown interrupts me in France at exposition opening—that's pluck! (5)

2 Admonish, or show you're right again? (7)

3 A kind of rubber? Research web on it extensively! (7)

4 Lots aimlessly improvise with no leader, but with a point. (6)

5 A runt's transformed a planet! (6)

6 A kind of radar proves doper hiding place shortly. (7)

7 Crazy tunic, Al! Nuts! (7)

8 It's only partly rustic, surreal... I'm confused! (9)

14 Big cat around Ugandan capital a single time. (5)

15 Millennium commencing in the universe's incineration. (9)

16 Letter from Greece, home of the Colossus, of which only half remains. (3)

17 See 6 across

20 Remarked, "Neat." (7)

21 Man upset over fit can be labeled. (7)

23 Nonprofessional program at European shows. (7)

24 In writer's estimation, using fewest words. (7)

25 It's a stable condition, and a family member, briefly, about sat up. (6)

26 Climb like Penny. (6)

29 Clothes for Shakespeare, sewed willy-nilly. (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3194

W	E	I	G	H	O	N	E	S	W	O	R	D	S	
O		N		Y		U		O		R		U		B
R	E	T	Y	P	E	D		U	N	L	U	C	K	Y
K		E		N		E		T		O		K		N
W	I	N	D	O	W		S	H	O	P	P	I	N	G
I		S		T		S		E				E		
T		E	M	I	T	T	E	R		V	E	S	T	A
H				Z		A		N		A				G
A	I	M	E	E		N	E	E	D	L	E	S		U
		A				D		R		I		A		E
W	I	L	D	R	O	S	E		A	D	A	M	I	C
I		A		E		T		E		A		U		H
L	O	R	E	L	E	I		D	E	T	E	R	G	E
L		I		I		L		I		E		A		C
	C	A	L	C	U	L	A	T	E	D	R	I	S	K

The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the second week in January, and biweekly the third week of July through the second week of September) by The Nation Company, L.P. © 2009 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, L.P., 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. (212) 209-5400. Washington Bureau: Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149, or call 1-800-333-8536. Publications Mail Agreement No: 40041477. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Bleuchip International, PO Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2. Canada Post: Publications Mail Agreement No.: 40612608. When ordering a subscription, please allow 4-6 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions. Basic annual subscription price: $52 for 47 issues. Back issues $6 prepaid ($8 foreign) from: The Nation, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. The Nation is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Nation, PO Box 55149, Boulder, CO 80322-5149. Printed in U.S.A. on recycled paper.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WARNING: IS YOUR MEMORY FADING?

Breakthrough medical research reveals "forgotten moments" may be caused by "brain starvation"

You may be able to avoid long-term issues if you act before it's too late. Leading medical researchers reveal discovery that triggers body's own production of mental "superfuel" and may help reverse the damage caused by stress and age.

Do you remember your first kiss but not where you left your car keys? You're not alone. Millions are discovering that as they age, their short term memory and mental sharpness seem to be slipping. The cause of these inconvenient "gaps" in memory sits deep inside your brain, among the billions of tiny nerve connections. New brain cell growth starts dropping after age 25, and then dramatically after 50, starting a downward spiral that can lead to everything from those frustrating "senior moments" to even more severe memory breakdowns.

Downward Memory Spiral is Reversible

Studies have shown that the efficiency of brain cells declines after years of free radical damage and stress. It was long believed that as we got older, memory problems were inevitable. But medical experts have revealed that **the downward memory spiral is reversible.** Compelling new research shows that there's a simple way to stimulate new brain cell growth that can boost your memory, improve your focus and restore your mind's mental sharpness.

Achieve Peak Brain Performance

Challenging mental games aren't enough to build a better brain. Your mind is the most complex and demanding organ in your body. It's also a high-performance supercomputer that requires the right chemical "foods" to perform at its peak.

One of the brain's most important nutrients is choline. Choline is a substance in our body that our brain desperately needs to help manufacture new cells and improve vital neurotransmitters (the basic processes of thinking and memory). Until now, it was believed that there was no way to safely and naturally produce this remarkable mental "superfuel." But after years of extensive research and testing, microbiologists and brain researchers at the University of North Carolina, in England at Newcastle General Hospital, and at the prestigious Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel have developed a way to help boost choline production. Their breakthrough formula also helps stimulate new brain cell growth, leading to a significant improvement in memory, concentration and helps clear stubborn "brain fog."

Are you starving your brain?

If you have experienced one or more of these symptoms, you may benefit from Neurostin®.

- ☑ Do you forget names or dates?
- ☑ Do you sometimes get confused?
- ☑ Do you find it difficult to do more than one thing at a time?
- ☑ Do you often forget why you walked into certain rooms?
- ☑ Do you find it hard to concentrate?

Improve Memory and Focus Without a Prescription

This exciting breakthrough discovery is now available in a ***time-release capsule*** called Neurostin® Complex-Memory Pill that is available without a prescription to anyone looking to sharpen their memory. Neurostin® contains a unique combination of antioxidants, botanicals and nutrients to support critical processes for good cognitive function. Its high concentration of specific brain-boosting ingredients helps improve the synthesis and transmission of neurotransmitters necessary for improved mental clarity. The Neurostin® formula is completely safe and contains no stimulants, ephedra or caffeine.

Protect Your Memory Now Before It's Too Late

Why wait until your lack of focus or forgetfulness creates an unsafe situation? Today it was your reading glasses, but tomorrow it could be the stove. You forget a phone number today, but tomorrow it could be where you parked your car at the mall.

Just as important is the personal toll that a fading memory can take on your family and friends. Don't you owe it to them and your future to take your brain's fitness as seriously as you do your heart health? It couldn't be easier. In as little as 30 days you can get back the mental sharpness and focus you had when you were 20 years younger! Act today and unlock your mind's true potential!

How Neurostin® Works

- **Provides the building blocks** of nerve cell membranes to promote optimal brain cell activity
- **Assists in the production** of acetylcholine, a vital component for improved mental performance
- **Helps relax blood vessels** to increase blood flow for maximum nutrient and oxygen delivery
- **Helps dispatch antioxidants** which inhibit free radical oxidation of nerve cell membranes

Having Trouble Finding Neurostin?

The makers of Neurostin® are so confidentthat they want to offer you a 30-Day Risk Free Trial, so you can experience the results firsthand.

To get your supply of Neurostin® risk free, for just a small shipping and processing fee call 888-424-0131.

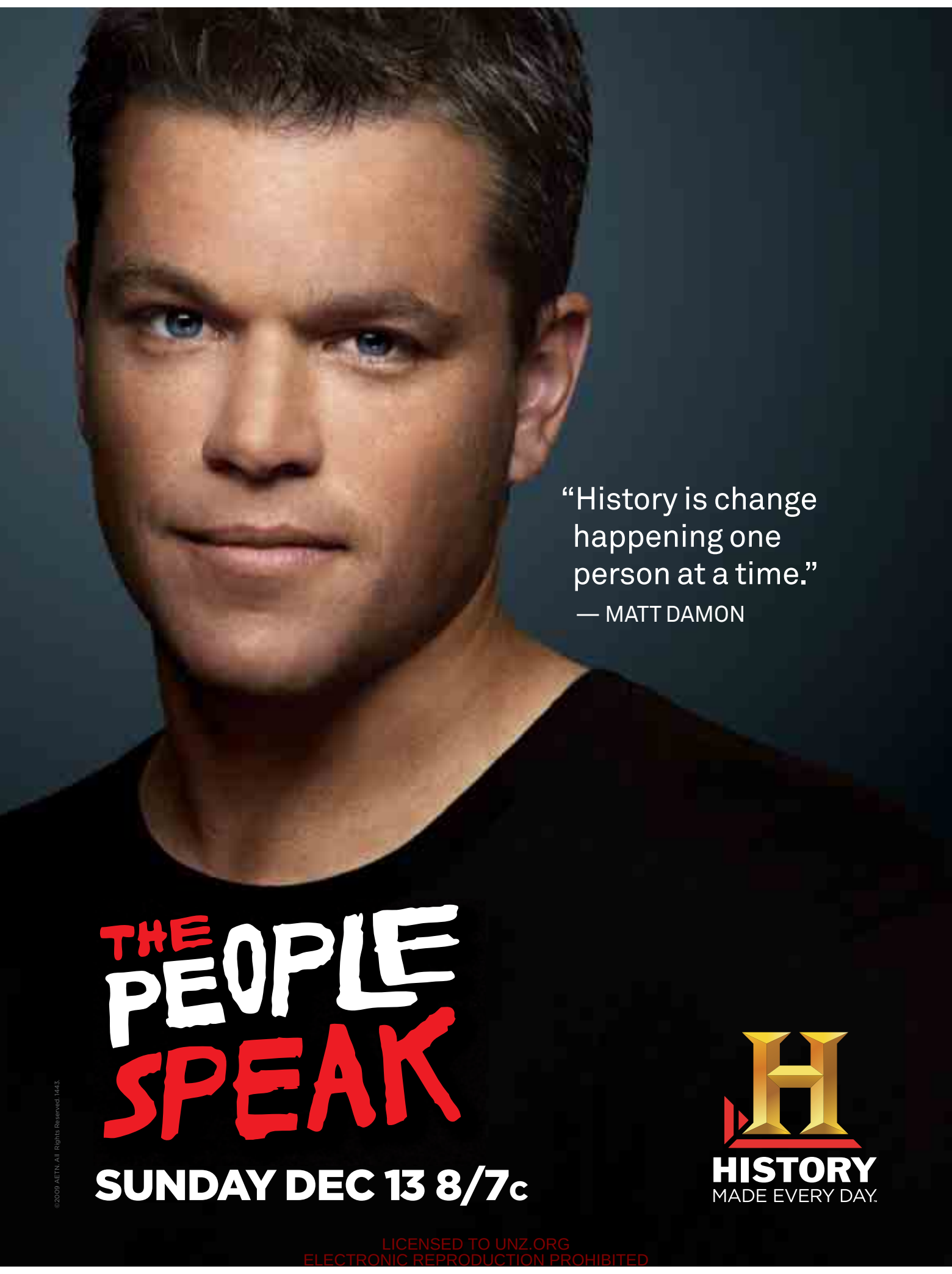
Call 888-424-0131 Today For Your 30 Day Risk-Free Trial of Neurostin® Complex-Memory

Mention Promotional Code NU100071

www.NeurostinDirect.com

These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to treat, diagnose, cure, mitigate or prevent any disease. Return postage may be required. Neurostin is not endorsed, associated or affiliated in any way with Newcastle Hospital, UNC, or the Weizmann Institute.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



©2009 AETN. All Rights Reserved. 1443.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED